

RICHMOND AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

MINUTES OF MEETING

June 12, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT

REPRESENTING

Daniel A. Gecker, Chairman	County of Chesterfield
William J. Pantele, Vice Chairman	City of Richmond
Daniel N. Lysy, Secretary (Alternate)	RRPDC
Joseph Andrews, Jr.	County of Goochland
Robert M. Berry	RMA
Linda G. Broady-Myers (Nonvoting)	EDAC
Malvern R. Butler	County of Goochland
Karin Carmack	County of Powhatan
Deborah B. Coats (Alternate)	County of Hanover
Timothy W. Cotman	County of Charles City
Tammye Davis (Nonvoting)	FHWA
Marleen K. Durfee	County of Chesterfield
E. Todd Eure	County of Henrico
Michael J. Flagg	County of Hanover
Thomas E. Flynn	City of Richmond
Lawrence C. Hagin (Hagin)	GRTC Transit System
Thomas A. Hawthorne	VDOT
James M. Holland	County of Chesterfield
George M. Homewood	County of New Kent
Patricia O'Bannon	County of Henrico
Ellen F. Robertson	City of Richmond
Robert R. Setliff	County of Hanover
Barbara K. Smith (Alternate)	County of Chesterfield
Von Tisdale (Nonvoting)	RideFinders
Stran L. Trout	County of New Kent

MEMBERS ABSENT

REPRESENTING

Charles Badger (Nonvoting)	VDRPT
Viktoria W. Badger	City of Richmond
Cliff Burnette (Nonvoting)	VDA
Tony Cho (Nonvoting)	FTA
Ralph J. "Joe" Emerson	County of Henrico
John Gordon	County of Hanover
John M. Lewis	GRTC Transit System
John McCracken	County of Chesterfield
Robert P. Morris (Nonvoting)	CTAC
Faye O. Prichard	Town of Ashland
Charles H. Rasnick (Nonvoting)	Citizen Appointee

MEMBERS ABSENT (Cont.)

REPRESENTING

John Rutledge.....CRAC
Frank Thornton County of Henrico
Carson Tucker (Alternate)County of Powhatan
Joseph E. Vidunas.....County of Hanover
Joseph B. WaltonCounty of Powhatan

OTHERS PRESENT

REPRESENTING

Steven AdamsChesterfield County Citizen
Daniel Grinnell..... VDOT
Lila LoizosMidlothian Corridor Business Association
Liz McAdory..... VDOT
Jim Ponticello..... VDOT
Mark E. Riblett (Alternate)..... VDOT
Stephen StoryJames River Bus Lines
Eric Stringfield..... VDOT
Jin Lee RRPDC
Barbara Nelson..... RRPDC
Archita Rajbhandary RRPDC
Sharon Robeson RRPDC
Lee Yolton RRPDC

CALL TO ORDER

MPO Chairman Daniel A. Gecker called the June 12, 2008 meeting of the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to order at approximately 2:35 p.m. in the large conference room of the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission offices.

I. ADMINISTRATION

A. Certification by MPO Secretary of Meeting Quorum –

Dan Lysy reported that a quorum was present.

B. Additions to MPO Agenda –

On motion by Michael Flagg, seconded by Malvern R. Butler, the MPO voted unanimously to amend the agenda to include new item III.E, Secondary Street Acceptance Regulations.

C. Minutes of the May 8, 2008 MPO Meeting –

On motion of Malvern R. Butler, seconded by Ellen F. Robertson, the MPO unanimously approved the minutes of the May 8, 2008 meeting as presented.

D. Open Public Comment Period –

There were no requests to address the MPO and Chairman Gecker closed the public comment period.

E. MPO Chairman's Report –

Chairman Gecker thanked the MPO for their tremendous support during his six-month term as Chairman.

1. MPO Nominating Committee Report –

In the absence of MPO Nominating Committee Chairman Robert Setliff, Stran Trout, member of the committee, reported that at this time, the committee nominates Henrico County representative Patricia S. O'Bannon for Vice Chairman and recommends deferring selection of the MPO Chairman to the August meeting. Mr. Trout noted that according to bylaws rotation order, the next chairman would be from the City of Richmond. He noted the City's intent is to appoint Kathy Graziano as a member to the MPO replacing Bill Pantele and said that at that time, Kathy Graziano is the likely candidate for FY 09 MPO Chairman. Chairman Gecker said that in light of the report of the Nominating Committee, he recommends the election of Pat O'Bannon as Vice Chair leaving the Chairmanship empty until the August meeting and with Ms. O'Bannon serving as Acting MPO Chairman. On motion by Stran L. Trout, seconded by Joseph Andrews, Jr., the MPO unanimously voted to elect Patricia S. O'Bannon as FY 09 MPO Vice Chairman.

2. Other Business –

Chairman Gecker had no other business to report.

F. RRPDC Transportation Director's Report –

1. Introduction of New Associate Planner –

Dan Lysy introduced new Associate Transportation Planner Anne Darby who has been working for the RRPDC as an intern. Mr. Lysy said Ms. Darby will begin working in her new capacity on July 16. Ms. Darby's introduction was followed by a round of applause.

2. Resolution in Recognition of Jin H. Lee for 20 Years of Service –

Dan Lysy asked Jin Hwan Lee, RRPDC Senior Transportation Planner, to come forward. Mr. Lysy noted that June 20, 2008 marks 20 years of service for Mr. Lee on RRPDC staff in support of Richmond Area MPO transportation planning efforts. Mr. Lysy read the MPO resolution as follows:

WHEREAS, Jin Hwan Lee has provided twenty years of dedicated and distinguished service as a Senior Planner with the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission, providing outstanding service in support of the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) regional transportation planning and programming process; and

WHEREAS, during his twenty years of service, Mr. Lee has provided key staff support assisting in a wide range and number of MPO planning and programming activities including the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), air quality conformity analysis, public participation, Unified Work Program, socioeconomic data, transit studies, congestion management system development, corridor studies, Title VI reviews, MPO certification reviews, and many other MPO plans, studies, reports, and programs; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Lee has provided primary technical staff support for the MPO's TIP, and during the time of service to the MPO, he has seen the TIP grow from a simple program document listing 182 projects and reported on 40 pages reflecting the allocation of federal, state, and local transportation funds, to the current TIP, which lists 419 projects reported on 168 pages obligating hundreds of millions of dollars in federal, state, and local transportation funds; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Lee has been the lead staff for reviewing and preparing proposed TIP amendments, which in fiscal year 1988, Mr. Lee's first year of employment with the RRPDC, consisted of two MPO amendment actions covering five projects; and for the current TIP, adopted in June, 2006, which includes to date seven MPO amendment actions covering 37 projects, as well as 159 TIP adjustment actions which are conducted on a continuing basis by RRPDC staff in consultation with VDOT and TAC; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Lee has tracked the allocation of federal Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) program funds since their inception and VDOT's first allocation of these funds to the MPO in fiscal years 1991/92 for CMAQ funds and fiscal years 1993/94 for RSTP funds; and during that time, Mr. Lee has tracked \$235,415,000 in RSTP and CMAQ allocated funds, which are currently allocated to 219 projects; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Lee is a loyal, dedicated, energetic, and hard-working member of the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission staff, and we wish to express our sincere thanks and appreciation for all of his fine work, team spirit, and assistance for these past twenty years;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization does hereby recognize Jin Hwan Lee for his outstanding work and contributions in support of the MPO's regional transportation planning and programming process.

Mr. Lee received a long round of applause and a standing ovation from the MPO. Mr. Lee said he has enjoyed working at the RRPDC with his co-workers. He thanked the MPO for their participation and dedication in support of MPO activities. He said he is especially proud of working on behalf of the people of the Richmond region developing transportation plans and programs on their behalf. Mr. Lee's comments were followed by another round of applause. Dan Lysy presented Mr. Lee with a gift certificate to Ruth's Chris Steak House given by RRPDC staff to honor him for his long service to the RRPDC. Chairman Gecker said on behalf of the MPO, they really appreciate Mr. Lee's years of dedicated service.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Report on Financial Close-Out of Previous Allocations of RSTP and CMAQ Funded Projects –

Mr. Riblett noted the letter under agenda tab three from VDOT Chief Financial Officer Reta Busher that speaks to the commitment to have a response to the MPO by December 1 on MPO concerns regarding financial close-out of previous allocations of RSTP and CMAQ funded projects. Chairman Gecker said the MPO remains hopeful for resolution and thanked Mr. Riblett for his report.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consent Action Items –

1. Authorization for Staff Travel; ITE 2008 Annual Meeting –

On motion of Patricia S. O'Bannon, seconded by Stran L. Trout, the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization unanimously approved the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) authorizes Jin H. Lee, Richmond Regional Planning District Commission Senior Planner, to attend the 2008 Institute of Transportation Engineers Annual Meeting in Anaheim, California.

B. MPO Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) Meeting Report –

Dan Lysy noted the report contained in the agenda package under tab 4 and, in the absence of CTAC Chairman Robert Morris, Barbara Nelson provided a brief report on the May 27 CTAC meeting. Ms. Nelson reported that the primary meeting topic was a presentation by Teri Barker-Morgan, with the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, and Kelly Hickok, a community advocate with Resources for Independent Living on a tool kit that is designed to integrate transportation planning and programming issues for people with disabilities into the regular planning processes for transportation. Ms. Nelson noted that CTAC also acted to recommend Henrico representatives Virginia Axtell and Bob Witte as CTAC Co-Chairs for FY 09 and Charles City County CTAC representative Stephen Adkins as FY 09 Vice Chair. Ms. Nelson offered to answer questions and there were none. Chairman Gecker thanked Ms. Nelson for her report.

C. Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Air Quality Conformity Analysis –

Dan Lysy introduced Jim Ponticello, VDOT Air Quality Program Manager, to provide a report on the air quality findings for the 2031 Long-Range Transportation Plan Update and the FY 09 – FY 12 TIP list of projects. Mr. Lysy said this analysis is a federal requirement and insures that air quality requirements are met.

Mr. Ponticello said he would briefly present the result of the conformity determination on the FY 09 – 12 TIP and the new 2031 Long-Range Plan. He noted the Executive Summary from the conformity determination was included in handout materials and the full conformity determination is posted on the RRPDC web site. Mr. Ponticello proceeded with his PowerPoint presentation using the following slides:

- Richmond/Tri-Cities Regional Conformity Analysis Results (cover slide)
- Richmond 8-Hour Ozone Maintenance Area (map)
- Methodology: Emissions Budget (chart)
- Methodology: Analysis Years (includes map)
- Models and Assumptions
- Conformity Analysis Results (bar graph)
- Conformity Analysis Schedule (chart)

Questions and discussion during and following Mr. Ponticello's presentation addressed the points:

- Reformulated gasoline, which has been in use in this region for several years, is a cleaner burning gasoline that reduces the emissions of volatile organic compounds and NO_x, both precursors to ozone. With the new Energy Policy Act, MTBE, a fuel additive, was phased out and replaced by ethanol in order to satisfy a renewable fuels mandate.
- Petersburg and Prince George, which were recently added to the Richmond nonattainment area, were analyzed using conventional gasoline. Those jurisdictions had the option and agreed to adopt reformulated gasoline; however, gasoline prices had spiked at that time and the Governor did not allow these jurisdictions to opt in.
- The huge drop in emissions projected between 2011 and 2018 is due to new motor vehicle emissions standards, the new low-sulfur gasoline and ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel. Motor vehicle emissions currently are decreasing rapidly because of the new, more stringent control requirements on new vehicles which are now coming into use. That decline is expected to level off in the early 2020s and the growth in VMT is anticipated to overtake this reduction in the early 2030s.
- The Metropolitan Richmond Air Quality Committee (MRAQC) does not need to meet for conformity purposes; they meet when VDEQ is putting together a new state implementation plan, such as was done when the region moved from an ozone maintenance area to a nonattainment area to address which contingency measures need to be adopted in order to meet federal requirements.

On motion of George M. Homewood, seconded by Patricia S. O'Bannon, the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization unanimously approved the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) finds the air quality conformity analysis for regionally significant projects included in the MPO's *2031 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Update* and *FY 09 – FY 12 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* to be in conformance with all applicable federal air quality conformity analysis requirements and accepts the conformity analysis findings as presented subject to final MPO action on the 2031 LRTP Update and FY 09 – FY 12 TIP.

D. 2031 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Update –

2031 LRTP Project Manager Lee Yolton provided a brief report on the plan and noted the schedule included under agenda tab six which sets forth the milestones for completion of the plan. Mr. Yolton reported that all work is on track to meet this schedule with final MPO approval scheduled for the August 14 meeting. Mr. Yolton noted that almost all of the draft plan is posted on the web site for review and provided an overview of the public review process.

E. Secondary Street Acceptance Regulations –

Dan Lysy distributed a handout on this new agenda item as submitted by Hanover County staff and requested that Mike Flagg address this issue. Mr. Flagg said he appreciates the MPO's consideration of this item. He said that Hanover definitely appreciates all the work that VDOT has done in the existing proposed VDOT Secondary Road Acceptance Standards, and noted that CTB member Gerald McCarthy has been very attentive in the hearings presented by Hanover County and in consideration of all the items. He said Hanover County would like the MPO's consideration of a resolution that would urge the CTB to remove the very rigid connectivity formula as proposed in these regulations. Mr. Flagg feels that there are a number of adverse impacts to Hanover County and to surrounding localities, that these regulations are too intensive and they can be replaced with more advisory goals and support existing ordinance requirements. He shared some of the comments in his discussion with Mr. Homewood, noting they both share ordinances to promote connectivity and as a part of that development process, local boards exercise discretion in that regard. He said he would be glad to entertain questions regarding the requested action and appreciates the MPO's consideration.

Chairman Gecker suggested taking a few minutes for everyone to read the draft resolution and Dan Lysy read the resolution aloud. Mike Flagg moved the resolution and George Homewood seconded the motion. Extensive discussion ensued and the following points were brought forward:

- Local governments need the ability and flexibility to do what needs to be done and the proposed regulation takes away that ability. Comprehensive plans include plans for roads with goals and objectives, but codifying the regulation and putting it on paper, forcing the issue, makes it impossible to make those decisions independently, case by case.
- This proposed regulation may, by accident, create through roads in developments that are lined with homes and children, where the design doesn't allow for the road to become a connector road.
- In Hanover County, in most instances, subdivisions provide stub roads to vacant property to provide for future connectivity when possible. There are many times where stubbing connects to wetlands which make it extremely expensive to provide connectivity to developments on the other side. The grid system doesn't always fit well, and for the state to mandate connectivity to surrounding subdivisions, without exception, or require that these roads then become local maintenance or privately maintained roads.
- Decisions for connectivity, especially through older neighborhoods and subdivisions are best made at the local level, in consultation with VDOT for the benefit of those who must live with the results of these decisions.

At the request of Chairman Gecker, Tom Hawthorne said he would try to address the proposed regulation. Mr. Hawthorne said the connectivity requirement is the centerpiece of the draft regulation. He said during the public comment period he heard statements that the connectivity requirement is too aggressive, as proposed in Virginia, and that other localities in other states have used a less aggressive connectivity requirement with success and that maybe VDOT should consider compromise. Mr. Hawthorne said he believes compromise might be a better approach than leaving decisions completely up to interpretation of these proposed standards by someone who must administer the regulations. He said the connectivity requirement is something that this administration is very interested in seeing and if this standard is too high or not achievable, then maybe some other standard would be more reasonable than none at all.

Marlene Durfee asked if any other jurisdictions have recently gone through any type of comprehensive plan revision linking land use and transportation trying to incorporate connectivity. Mr. Setliff responded that the recently approved Hanover County comprehensive plan includes a transportation plan and a suburban service area which the county has used for years to try to contain growth and density in areas of the county served by major highways. Mr. Setliff said the transportation plan is an integral part of the comprehensive plan; however, he also noted that the geography of Hanover County often does not accommodate a grid system. He also expressed concern about making decisions that look good on paper that decrease the quality of life for residents of an existing neighborhood by creating a busy “cut-through” to accomplish connectivity.

Mr. Hawthorne noted that because this is in response to a public comment period on this subject, he would abstain from voting on this resolution. Chairman Gecker noted that connectivity is an important issue and that we should have more, not less saying that he doesn't have confidence that this can be accomplished at the local level. He said it has been his experience that without some kind of mandate for connectivity, years of good planning go out the window through the political process and that maybe rules are needed to help weaker boards through some of these decisions. However, Chairman Gecker said he believes the existing proposal may go too far and noted that Chesterfield's technical staff has expressed concerns about ambiguity and how the regulation would be applied. He said he hopes that through some negotiation with VDOT, regulations that make sense could be put in place and accomplish the connectivity goal. Chairman Gecker also noted that this item was presented at the last minute and that it makes assumptions that may or may not be accurate and which cannot be thoroughly reviewed prior to making a decision. He noted the example of the “Whereas” that says “...mandated road interconnections will increase impervious area...” and said he doesn't know this to be true.

Jim Holland noted that he prefers not to vote on last minute issues without having appropriate study and review with regard to the pros and cons. He also noted that he is uncomfortable with the removal of local flexibility.

Pat O'Bannon noted that Henrico County requests a proffer from the developer and that a large sign is placed at the end of every stub road that identifies it as a stub road and informs that it will eventually be connected to another community so that citizens are well informed about the connectivity intent.

Mike Flagg assured Chairman Gecker that all the analysis done in Hanover County on their subdivisions indicates that if they add these connections, it will undoubtedly increase impervious surface and when combined with proposed regulations for stormwater, it raises the water quality treatment requirement for those same surfaces, and this could have an adverse affect that could promote sprawl. Mr. Flagg offered to share examples. Chairman Gecker assured Mr. Flagg that it's not that he believes it is not true, but rather that he does not know it to be true yet through examination of details. He said Chesterfield staff has indicated in summary fashion Mr. Flagg's assertions, but there really is no evidence before the MPO other than the resolution saying that it's true.

Chairman Gecker called for additional questions, and when there were none, the question was called for a vote.

On motion of J. Michael Flagg, seconded by George M. Homewood, the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization approved the following resolution with 10 votes in favor and eight votes in abstention:

WHEREAS, Chapter 382 of the 2007 Acts of Assembly (SB1181) added Section 33.1-70.3 to the *Code of Virginia* which requires the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to develop Street Acceptance Requirements to determine the conditions and standards that must be met before secondary streets constructed by developers, localities and entities other than the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will be accepted into the state secondary system for maintenance by VDOT; and

WHEREAS, the legislative intent of the regulation is in part to 1) ensure the connectivity of road and pedestrian networks with the existing and future transportation network; and 2) minimize stormwater runoff and impervious surface area; and

WHEREAS, the member jurisdictions of the MPO recognize that connectivity is an important and complex issue which is best addressed on a case-by-case basis, by local governments; and

WHEREAS, the area type designations and associated connectivity indices are in many cases inconsistent with local comprehensive plans and may result in an undesirable expanded road network and consequent increase in maintenance cost; and

WHEREAS, mandated road interconnections will increase impervious area and may increase impacts to streams and wetlands which is contrary to the legislative intent to minimize stormwater runoff and impervious area; and

WHEREAS, if streets cannot be designed to meet public acceptance criteria and thus not be maintained as public streets, it may unreasonably jeopardize disaster recovery efforts in communities since disaster relief is greatly hinged on public infrastructure as well as increasing costs to citizens and local governments; and

WHEREAS, the CTB is seeking public input on the draft regulations:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the MPO hereby recommends that the CTB remove from the regulation the mandatory connectivity formula and in its place establish a flexible requirement that places connectivity in balance with environmental, fiscal and social requirements, so as to better account for the unique characteristics, topography and challenges associated in developing new road networks.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Cancellation of the July 10, 2008 MPO Meeting –

Chairman Gecker noted staff's request to cancel the July 10 MPO meeting and on motion by Patricia S. O'Bannon, seconded by Deborah B. Coats, the MPO voted unanimously to cancel the July 10 meeting as requested.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Dan Gecker adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:15 p.m.