

RICHMOND AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

MINUTES OF MEETING

November 13, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT

REPRESENTING

Kathy C. Graziano, Chair	City of Richmond
Patricia S. O’Bannon, Vice Chair	County of Henrico
Joseph Andrews, Jr.	County of Goochland
Virginia H. Axtell (Nonvoting).....	CTAC
Viktoria W. Badger.....	City of Richmond
Robert M. Berry	RMA
Malvern R. Butler	County of Goochland
Deborah B. Coats (Alternate)	County of Hanover
Timothy W. Cotman	County of Charles City
Robert A. Crum, Jr.....	RRPDC
Tammye Davis (Nonvoting)	FHWA
Marleen K. Durfee	County of Chesterfield
E. Todd Eure	County of Henrico
J. Michael Flagg (Alternate)	County of Hanover
Thomas E. Flynn.....	City of Richmond
Daniel A. Gecker	County of Chesterfield
Thomas A. Hawthorne	VDOT
Edward L. Henson, III	Town of Ashland
George M. Homewood.....	County of New Kent
Barbara K. Smith (Alternate).....	County of Chesterfield
Von Tisdale (Nonvoting)	RideFinders
Stran L. Trout.....	County of New Kent
Joseph E. Vidunas.....	County of Hanover
Joseph B. Walton	County of Powhatan
Dexter C. White (Alternate).....	City of Richmond

MEMBERS ABSENT

REPRESENTING

Charles Badger (Nonvoting).....	VDRPT
Linda G. Broady-Myers (Nonvoting)	EDAC
Cliff Burnette (Nonvoting)	VDA
Karin Carmack	County of Powhatan
Tony Cho (Nonvoting).....	FTA
Ralph J. “Joe” Emerson	County of Henrico
John Gordon.....	County of Hanover
James M. Holland	County of Chesterfield
John M. Lewis.....	GRTC Transit System

MEMBERS ABSENT (Cont.)

REPRESENTING

John McCracken County of Chesterfield
Ellen F. Robertson City of Richmond
John Rutledge..... CRAC
Robert R. Setliff County of Hanover
Frank Thornton County of Henrico

OTHERS PRESENT

REPRESENTING

Daniel N. Lysy, **Secretary** (Alternate)..... RRPDC
John T. Benton Citizen
Roger Bohnert..... U.S. DOT, MARAD
Sean Connaughton U.S. DOT, MARAD
Rachel Flynn City of Richmond
John Heckman..... Port of Richmond Commission
Kelly Hickok..... Resources for Independent Living, EDAC Member
Walter Johnson..... VDOT
Liz McAdory..... VDOT
David McNeel..... Port of Richmond
Daniel Rudge VDRPT
Eyal Shapira..... Raritan Central Railway
Shelly Aprill..... RRPDC
Anne Darby..... RRPDC
Jo Evans RRPDC
Jin Lee..... RRPDC
Barbara Nelson..... RRPDC
Sharon Robeson RRPDC
Matt Weaver..... RRPDC
Lee Yolton RRPDC

CALL TO ORDER

MPO Chairman Kathy C. Graziano called the November 13, 2008 meeting of the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to order at approximately 3:10 p.m. in the large conference room of the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission offices.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

“64 Express,” Hampton Roads to Richmond James River Barge Service –

Chairman Graziano introduced Sean Connaughton, Administrator of the Maritime Administration (MARAD) who will report on the progress of the James River barge service from Hampton Roads to Richmond, a project for which the MPO voted to provide

CMAQ funds over the next several years. Mr. Connaughton thanked Chairman Graziano for the introduction and provided information about the MARAD Marine Highway program and about the James River barge project scheduled to begin December 1. He said on the national level, MARAD is moving forward on a comprehensive program to encourage the shift of cargoes from the roadways and railways onto the waterways, noting that in Europe and China, over 60 percent of freight moves by water to the major ports and that in the U.S., our waterways are underutilized. Mr. Connaughton said there is such a concentration of freight in the large, major ports that many of the smaller ports, such as the Port of Richmond, are underutilized noting that when developed, they reduce congestion, ease environmental issues, and significantly increase freight capacity at a much lower cost than adding a lane to I-64.

Mr. Connaughton credited Barbara Nelson, Dan Lysy and the MPO leadership for being one of the first in the nation to look at this issue, recognize it as a great opportunity and make it a reality. He also credited the Port of Richmond and the Virginia Port Authority for their hard work in making the James River barge service happen. He said he anticipates this service will become a model for developing marine highways nationwide. He said once the marine highway framework with designated routes is established, then MARAD will push for individual projects and he anticipates that Congress will provide money and resources, if not in the stimulus package currently being discussed, then in the reauthorization of the federal transportation legislation which will contain a fairly extensive section on trying to encourage marine highways. He also noted that when Congress acted to establish the marine highway program under MARAD, they also specifically stated that the waterways are an extension of the surface transportation system and that opened the potential for funding and support in the federal transportation program. Mr. Connaughton said he believes when the James River barge service begins December 1, that the congestion relief and environmental impacts will become obvious and that the service should also positively impact jobs in the Richmond area.

Mr. Connaughton introduced Roger Bohnert, Deputy Associate Administrator of the MARAD Intermodal Systems Development Program, who has worked diligently with Richmond Area MPO staff and also with contacts in Norfolk to facilitate this project. He thanked the MPO for the opportunity to say thank you and said the rest of the country is going to be looking to Richmond, talking to Barbara and others trying to get a better idea about some of the things that have to go into actually starting this type of service. Mr. Connaughton offered to answer questions.

Kathy Graziano inquired what the reaction is from the people who transport goods in the region and whether they are enthusiastic about using barges instead of trucks. Mr. Connaughton said the two communities most affected are the shippers, who are the ones that actually control the cargoes in the containers, and the truckers themselves. Noting that there is currently a shortfall of truckers, he said one of the most involved groups in pushing for the marine highway is the trucking community. Considering the cost of fuel, he said the trucking industry is looking for ways to increase capacity. Moving the port 100 miles inland allows truckers to make more efficient use of their trucks and drivers. Mr. Connaughton said the effort is focused on the shippers because they are the ones who

control the route by which the freight gets to its destination. He said there has been a lot of interest from those who are moving hazardous materials. Because of permit requirements and security issues, they would like to move hazardous materials off the roads onto the waterways. He said they are also getting more buy-in from some of the bigger shippers.

There were no additional questions and Chairman Graziano thanked Mr. Connaughton for his presentation. Dan Lysy thanked Barb Nelson for all her hard work on this effort saying this is a very important project for our region and noting that the inception of this project was only a short time ago, at the October 2007 AMPO meeting. Mr. Lysy said to have a project go from concept to launch in a little over a year is an extraordinary accomplishment in the transportation field.

I. ADMINISTRATION

A. Certification by MPO Secretary of Meeting Quorum –

Dan Lysy reported that a quorum was present.

B. Additions to MPO Agenda –

There were no requests for additions to the agenda.

C. Minutes of the October 9, 2008 MPO Meeting –

On motion of Malvern R. Butler, seconded by Patricia S. O'Bannon, the MPO unanimously approved the minutes of the October 9, 2008 meeting as presented.

D. Open Public Comment Period –

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

E. MPO Chairman's Report –

In the interest of time, Chairman Graziano had nothing to report.

F. RRPDC Transportation Director's Report –

In the interest of time, Mr. Lysy had nothing to report.

II. OLD BUSINESS

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

Tom Hawthorne, VDOT Richmond District Administrator, reported that he has been in touch with the VDOT Chief Financial Officer Reta Busher's office in the past couple of days, and he understands that the report is prepared and awaiting final approval by Ms. Busher. He said the MPO should be receiving the report within the next few days, certainly before the December 1 deadline, as promised. Chairman Graziano said the MPO is looking forward to receiving this report and expressed appreciation for Mr. Hawthorne's work on this matter.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consent Action Item –

1. Authorization for Staff Travel; TRB Annual Conference –

On motion of Patricia S. O'Bannon, seconded by Malvern R. Butler, the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization unanimously approved the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) authorizes Richmond Regional Planning District Commission (RRPDC) staff to attend the Annual Transportation Research Board Conference in Washington, D.C., January 11-14, 2009.

Joe Andrews suggested that it would be helpful to the MPO Board to know what is learned at conferences staff attends with a brief report of major interest items from the conference, not necessarily a detailed report. Chairman Graziano said that is an excellent suggestion and thanked Mr. Andrews.

B. Recommendations for Conducting the Next Long-Range Transportation Plan Update –

Lee Yolton reviewed MPO adoption action on the *2031 Long-Range Transportation Plan Update* in August saying the MPO also acted to continue the Long-Range Transportation Plan Advisory Committee to meet for the purpose of providing comments and recommendations on a process for developing the next LRTP. Mr. Yolton said this effort was in the nature of lessons learned looking at how this process can be

streamlined and improved for the next LRTP update effort. Mr. Yolton reported that the LRTP Advisory Committee met September 25 and developed recommendations, which fall into five categories. Mr. Yolton referenced the report contained in the MPO agenda package under tab four and provided a PowerPoint presentation on the report using the following slides:

- RAMPO 2031 Long Range Transportation Plan (cover slide, photo)
- 2031 LRTP Advisory Committee Recommendations
- I. Planning Process
- II. Transportation Demand Modeling
- III. Proactive Community Involvement
- IV. Regionalism
- V. Variables
- Thank You!

Mr. Yolton completed his presentation, offered to answer questions, and none were asked.

On motion of George M. Homewood, seconded by Viktoria W. Badger, the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization unanimously approved the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) accepts the 2031 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Advisory Committee's report on "Recommendations for Conducting the Next LRTP Update" and directs staff and others involved with the LRTP's development to fully utilize these recommendations as it proceeds to develop the next LRTP update.

C. SYIP Revisions and Upcoming STIP Public Hearings –

Tom Hawthorne, VDOT Richmond District Administrator, reported that as a result of recent declining revenue projections, VDOT will conduct two separate processes dealing with the SYIP during the remainder of this fiscal year. First, VDOT will prepare a draft revision of the current FY 09 – FY 14 Six-Year Improvement Plan (SYIP) to present to the CTB at their December meeting. Subsequent to that meeting, there will be a series of five public hearings around the state to receive comments on the draft revised SYIP with CTB action to follow in January or February. Mr. Hawthorne said he learned just today that the hearing for the Richmond area, which will include the regions of Fredericksburg, Richmond and Lynchburg, will be held in mid-January at the VDOT Central Office auditorium in Richmond. Mr. Hawthorne said there will be a series of public announcements and letters to provide information about the meetings.

Next, VDOT will begin the regular process to update the 2010 – 2015 SYIP. Mr. Hawthorne reported that process should begin sometime in February 2009, anticipating CTB action on a new Six-Year Plan in June, which is the normal scheduled completion for that process. He said that is the most recent information he has and that it seems to be fairly firm, though there are still some details to be worked out. He said VDOT will communicate details to local governments and others as they normally do. Questions and discussion following Mr. Hawthorne's report brought forward the following points:

- VDOT rough planning estimates indicate a likely 30 percent funding reduction for primary and interstate highway systems statewide in the current FY 09 – FY 14 SYIP amounting to a total of \$1 billion over the six-year period.
- The VDOT process for addressing the shortfall in funding involves a prioritization process that places top priority on completion of projects currently underway.
- Neither VDOT nor FHWA have received word that an economic stimulus package would be available to help bridge the gap of the funding shortfall.
- Responding to a question, MARAD Administrator Sean Connaughton noted that Congress transferred \$8 billion from general revenues into the National Highway Trust Fund last year and still expects a deficit next spring due to declining revenues. He said Congressional leaders are discussing the best way to address this issue and are discussing a stimulus package, but details are not available yet.
- The Richmond region should consider having a list of projects ready to submit should an economic stimulus package provide additional funding for transportation projects.
- Local government officials and agency heads need VDOT to provide more specific information quickly so they may appropriately plan for how to address a shortfall as they prepare their local budgets.

D. MPO Regional Transportation Priority Projects –

Chairman Graziano reported that the MPO Executive Committee met earlier today and discussed Regional Transportation Priority Projects and staff distributed their report. Dan Lysy said that the Executive Committee's recommendation on Regional Transportation Priority Projects reflects the recommendation of the Technical Advisory Committee with the addition of four new projects. He said he believes this balances what the region's upcoming needs will be in terms of VDOT needing to take action to reduce funds in the current Six-Year Improvement Program and then instituting the review process for allocating funds in the upcoming SYIP. Mr. Lysy said the TAC recommendation is structured so that projects listed under priority number

one represent our current priority projects that the current SYIP shows as fully funded and serve as MPO guidance to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) with these projects given priority for preservation of funding. He said priorities two through seven list the other regional priority projects from last year's list, some of which are funded and some are not. Mr. Lysy said the list of New Projects developed by TAC includes two projects previously included under the GRTC Improvements priority, the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and the transfer center. Mr. Lysy noted that the platform extension at Main Street Station has been one of the region's long-standing projects, but is in the more distant future. He said the last four projects under the New Projects list were projects added by the MPO Executive Committee as regional priorities for funding consideration.

George Homewood inquired about the beginning and end points for the Forest Hill Avenue and Jahnke Road projects and Chairman Graziano defined those points saying that the engineering has already been done for both of those roads.

On motion of George M. Homewood, seconded by Viktoria W. Badger, the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization unanimously approved the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) approves the report of the MPO Executive Committee on Regional Transportation Priority Projects establishing this list as the MPO's updated list of Regional Transportation Priority Projects and authorizes the submission of this list to the Commonwealth Transportation Board for its review and consideration in selecting transportation projects and allocating state and federal funds in the upcoming Virginia Department of Transportation Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) and in considering revisions to the current SYIP.

Regional Transportation Priority Projects are identified and ranked as follows:

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Project</u>
1	Preservation of funding of "fully funded" priority projects in the current FY 09 – FY 14 SYIP, including:
1.1	RIC Access Improvements: Airport Drive (Clarkson Road to Charles City Road)
1.2	Main Street Station
1.3	Route 360 East, Hanover County
1.4	Huguenot Bridge Reconstruction
1.5	Route 250, Goochland County

- 1.6 I-64 Widening, Henrico to Goochland County
- 1.7 Virginia Capital Trail
- 2 South East High Speed Rail Corridor: Richmond to Washington
- 3 Route 10, Chesterfield County
- 4 Parham Road/Patterson Interchange, Henrico
- 5 I-95/Lewistown Road: Interim Interchange Improvements, Hanover County
- 6 High Speed Rail: Richmond/Hampton Roads
- 7 I-64 Widening from I-295 to James City County

New Projects (Unranked)

- Broad Street Bus Rapid Transit from Willow Lawn to Rockett's Landing
- GRTC Downtown Transfer Center
- Platform Extensions at Main Street Station
- Route 711/Huguenot Trail Widening (Rt. 288 to Chesterfield Co.)
- I-295/Meadowville Interchange
- Forest Hill Avenue Widening (Hathaway Rd. to Powhite Pkwy.)
- Jahnke Road Widening (Forest Hill Avenue to Blakemore Rd.)

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was brought forward for MPO consideration.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Kathy Graziano adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:55 p.m.