

RICHMOND AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES OF MEETING

October 8, 2009

MEMBERS PRESENT

REPRESENTING

Patricia S. O'Bannon, Chair	County of Henrico
Nora Amos (Alternate)	Town of Ashland
Joseph Andrews, Jr.	County of Goochland
Viktoria W. Badger	City of Richmond
James R. Banks (Alternate).....	County of Chesterfield
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
Robert A. Crum, Jr.	RRPDC
Tammye Davis (Nonvoting)	FHWA
Marleen K. Durfee	County of Chesterfield
E. Todd Eure	County of Henrico
Daniel A. Gecker	County of Chesterfield
Kathy C. Graziano	City of Richmond
Thomas A. Hawthorne	VDOT
James M. Holland	County of Chesterfield
George M. Homewood.....	County of New Kent
Nicholas Macauley (Alternate).....	City of Richmond
Ellen F. Robertson	City of Richmond
Robert R. Setliff	County of Hanover
Frank J. Thornton.....	County of Henrico
Von Tisdale (Nonvoting)	RideFinders
Stran L. Trout.....	County of New Kent
Joseph E. Vidunas.....	County of Hanover
Joseph B. Walton	County of Powhatan

MEMBERS ABSENT

REPRESENTING

Edward L. Henson, III, Vice Chair	Town of Ashland
Stephen R. Adkins (Nonvoting).....	CTAC
Cliff Burnette (Nonvoting)	VDA
Tony Cho (Nonvoting).....	FTA
John Gordon.....	County of Hanover
Corey W. Hill (Nonvoting).....	VDRPT
John M. Lewis.....	GRTC Transit System
John McCracken	County of Chesterfield

MEMBERS ABSENT (Cont.)

REPRESENTING

Jean M. Moore County of Henrico
John Rutledge.....CRAC

OTHERS PRESENT

REPRESENTING

Daniel N. Lysy, (Alternate), **Secretary** RRPDC
John T. Benton Citizen
Douglas G. Conner (Alternate).....City of Richmond
Thomas E. Flynn.....City of Richmond
Daniel T. Grinnell VDOT
Richard Lockwood..... VHB
Kevin B. Page VDRPT
Mark Riblett (Alternate) VDOT
Curtis Smith Smithworks & Co.
Stephen Story James River Bus Lines
Ronald Svejkovsky VDOT
Anne Darby RRPDC
Chuck Gates RRPDC
Barbara Jacocks RRPDC
Jin Lee RRPDC
Sharon Robeson RRPDC
Greta Ryan RRPDC
Randy Selleck RRPDC
Sarah Smith RRPDC
Jacqueline Stewart RRPDC
Kathy Wright RRPDC
Lee Yolton RRPDC

CALL TO ORDER

MPO Chairman Patricia S. O’Bannon called the October 8, 2009 meeting of the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to order at approximately 3:05 p.m. in the Board Room of the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission offices. All present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag.

I. ADMINISTRATION

A. Certification by MPO Secretary of Meeting Quorum –

Dan Lysy reported that a quorum was present.

B. Additions to MPO Agenda –

No additions or changes to the agenda were requested.

C. Minutes of the September 10, 2009 MPO Meeting –

On motion of Kathy C. Graziano, seconded by Stran L. Trout, the minutes of the October 8, 2009 MPO meeting were unanimously approved as presented.

D. Open Public Comment Period –

There were no requests to address the MPO.

E. MPO Chairman's Report –

Chairman O'Bannon had no report.

F. RRPDC Transportation Director's Report –

1. Introductions of New RRPDC Staff –

Dan Lysy introduced new staff member Barbara V. Jacocks, Principal Planner in the Planning and Information Systems Division. Ms. Jacocks provided a brief summary of her background, experience and RRPDC work efforts. Chairman O'Bannon welcomed Ms. Jacocks.

2. Other Business –

Mr. Lysy had no other business to report.

II. OLD BUSINESS

No old business was brought forward for consideration.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consent Action Item –

1. Transportation Enhancement Funds Applications Endorsement –

On motion of George M. Homewood, seconded by Kathy C. Graziano, the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization unanimously approved the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization endorses those applications for Transportation Enhancement funds that are endorsed by area local governments or by quasi-jurisdictional entities in the region.

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

In the absence of the CTAC Chairman, Dan Lysy noted information provided in tab three of the agenda package on the September 22 CTAC meeting and provided a brief summary of major meeting topics including a report by RRPDC Executive Director Robert Crum on regional efforts in support of high speed rail and a presentation on Virginia's High Speed Rail Initiative by Daniel Plaughter. CTAC also considered recommending to the MPO a resolution calling for Rails with Trails in Virginia requiring that as the Commonwealth funds rail expansion, enhancement and renovation projects that bicycle and pedestrian accommodations be an integral and mandatory component of these projects. He said the motion failed on tie vote and additional information on the issue will be presented for discussion and consideration at a future CTAC meeting. Mr. Lysy noted the primary meeting topic for the November 17 CTAC meeting will focus on the Port of Richmond and coordinating efforts with the Virginia Port Authority to provide transportation benefits and economic opportunities to the region.

C. ARRA High-Speed Rail Update –

Kevin Page, Chief of Rail Transportation, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, provided a PowerPoint presentation on High Speed Rail in Virginia. He provided a brief history of rail development in the U.S. and the national vision for high speed rail development; noted new service in the northeast corridor; and discussed the vision and planning initiatives for development of the southeast high-speed rail corridor. Mr. Page focused on high-speed rail development in the Washington, D.C. to Richmond Region, service from Petersburg to Raleigh, and high-speed rail development in the Richmond to Hampton Roads corridor addressing development milestones, schedules, environmental and alternative route considerations, coordination with Amtrak and freight rail interests, project status and next steps. Mr. Page gave a thorough overview of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) high-speed rail strategic plan, ARRA, key dates for ARRA funding, and FRA's high-speed/intercity passenger rail implementation timeline. Mr. Page detailed Virginia's ARRA high-speed rail pre-application projects and related key points regarding Virginia passenger rail service pointing out strong competitive factors for funding. He also noted that \$57 billion in project applications were received for \$8 billion in ARRA high-speed rail improvement funds available nationally. Following his presentation, Mr. Page answered questions with the following major points brought forward:

- Applications for the ARRA high-speed rail funds are massive stacks of paperwork and documentation which require substantial review time and award announcements will take several months; selections will be merit-based, will reflect President Obama's transportation vision.

- With the goal of connecting the Southeast Corridor as quickly as possible, Phase I improvements will be made south of Acca yard, from Hermitage to Hospital Street and Fulton, constructing crossovers, upgrading track, updating the signal system, putting in a turning “Y” and making Main Street Station platform improvements for passenger rail to add three trains a day through Main Street Station.
- Though Virginia has no dedicated transportation funding source, the state is not proposing additional service and is in a very good position to receive ARRA funds due to the programmed three-year demonstration project with funds already identified by the CTB.
- Rail proponents in Virginia are very clear with their message that Virginia needs a dedicated funding source for passenger rail.
- During the first week of service, the new D.C. to Lynchburg route had 263 passengers get off in Charlottesville who had boarded from every station from Boston to D.C.; connectivity to the northeast corridor is Virginia’s greatest strength.

Vickey Badger commended Kevin Page for his dedicated work on complex rail issues – the planning, technology and relationships with the railroads – and thanked him for his tireless advocacy for rail in the Richmond Region and for passenger rail in Virginia over many years.

Mr. Page thanked the MPO for their support and noted the overwhelming outpouring of support for passenger rail funding the state received through letters and resolutions from every political subdivision and local and state business associations from the Richmond Region all the way up the rail corridor to Washington, D.C.

In response to a question by Ellen Robertson regarding establishment of a Regional Transportation Authority, Bob Crum reported that the RRPDC Transportation Strategy Funding Work Group met and concluded there does not appear to be support for a regional transportation authority at this time. He said they formed a subcommittee to talk about options that might exist for regional transportation funding under the Richmond Metropolitan Authority (RMA), recognizing there may be significant issues to deal with given the City of Richmond’s up-front investment to establish the RMA. Ellen Robertson requested that she be kept informed of meetings and the work of this subcommittee in light of other issues the City’s Finance Committee is discussing with RMA and Mr. Crum agreed to do that.

D. Virginia Association of MPOs (VAMPO) –

Dan Lysy said House Joint Resolution (HJR) 756 was passed in the last term of the General Assembly as a study resolution requesting that VDOT work with the Virginia Planning District Commissions and the Transportation Planning Board for the National Capital Area on establishing the Virginia Association of MPOs and defining what their

role and process should be and to provide a report for the coming session of the Virginia General Assembly. Mr. Lysy said there was an initial discussion of HJR 756 at the VAPDC summer meeting and the PDC Executive Directors set a meeting for August 25 in Charlottesville for PDC and MPO directors in Virginia, VDOT staff, and Deputy Secretary of Transportation Ralph Davis. At this August 25 meeting, participants were informed that the requested recommendations to the General Assembly needed to be complete and submitted to the Virginia Secretary of Transportation by November 1. An Organization Committee and a White Paper committee were organized with a “cookie cutter” resolution developed calling for the endorsement of a Virginia Association of MPOs in concept. Mr. Lysy said one of the key points made in the paper that is not reflected in the resolution is a request that the Virginia General Assembly not address legislation for establishing VAMPO this coming year to provide time to explore this in more detail. However, he said the VAPDC Organization Group felt that MPOs could reasonably support the concept of endorsing the establishment of a Virginia Association of MPOs.

RRPDC Executive Director Bob Crum reported that the Executive Committee was concerned that they and members of the MPO have not had a real opportunity to discuss and consider the proposed resolution or to consult with staff to understand their opinions, and that to ask for action on this resolution today would be premature. The MPO Executive Committee recommended that this item be discussed today and to take this month to consider and discuss the resolution with local staff. In addition, the Executive Committee and staff both agree that the resolution as currently structured is too open-ended and vague. Mr. Crum said the Executive Committee and staff agree that the action statement in the last paragraph of the resolution should provide more concrete details, and he recommended drawing on language from the “Final Recommendations” paragraph on the last page of the white paper to modify the resolution. That paragraph includes a request that in the upcoming General Assembly session, the General Assembly take no additional action on issues related to MPOs; that within the next year the Virginia Metropolitan Planning Organizations work on detailed bylaws for the organization; and that they also determine any specific funding needs for this organization. He said the Executive Committee was very concerned that they not create an organization with an unknown financial commitment.

Chairman O’Bannon noted that Delegate Cosgrove, Chesapeake, was the only patron of HJR 756, and while it would establish a state coordinating body for the MPOs, there remains the question as to why Delegate Cosgrove proposed the legislation. She noted that under advice of several legislative advisors, if MPO wants to pass resolution, it should include more specific language with regard to what it would cost, what structures would need to be set up, location and staffing and operation. Mr. Crum offered that if the MPO should decide to defer action for one month, he

and Mr. Lysy would make the appropriate contacts and let them know the Richmond Area MPO's recommendation would be coming following the November 12 MPO meeting.

On motion of Malvern R. Butler, seconded by Frank Thornton, the MPO voted unanimously to defer consideration of action on a resolution regarding the formation of a Virginia Association of MPOs (VAMPO) to the November MPO meeting allowing staff the time to revise the resolution incorporating more specific language.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was brought forward for MPO consideration.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman O'Bannon adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:05 p.m.