

RICHMOND AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES OF MEETING

February 11, 2010

MEMBERS PRESENT

REPRESENTING

Patricia S. O'Bannon, Chair	County of Henrico
Edward L. Henson, III, Vice Chair	Town of Ashland
Joseph Andrews, Jr.	County of Goochland
Viktoriya W. Badger	City of Richmond
Robert M. Berry	RMA
Linda G. Broady-Myers (Nonvoting)	EDAC
Malvern R. Butler	County of Goochland
Douglas G. Conner (Alternate)	City of Richmond
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
Thomas E. Flynn	City of Richmond
Daniel A. Gecker	County of Chesterfield
Kathy C. Graziano	City of Richmond
Lawrence A. Hagin (Alternate)	GRTC Transit System
Thomas A. Hawthorne	VDOT
James M. Holland	County of Chesterfield
George M. Homewood	County of New Kent
Amy M. Inman (Nonvoting Alternate)	VDRPT
Jean M. Moore	County of Henrico
Robert R. Setliff	County of Hanover
Barbara K. Smith (Alternate)	County of Chesterfield
Stran L. Trout	County of New Kent
Joseph E. Vidunas	County of Hanover
Joseph B. Walton	County of Powhatan

MEMBERS ABSENT

REPRESENTING

Stephen R. Adkins (Nonvoting)	CTAC
Cliff Burnette (Nonvoting)	VDA
Karin Carmack	County of Powhatan
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
Ellen F. Robertson	City of Richmond

MEMBERS ABSENT (cont.)

REPRESENTING

John Rutledge.....CRAC
Frank J. Thornton..... County of Henrico
Von Tisdale (Nonvoting) RideFinders

OTHERS PRESENT

REPRESENTING

Daniel N. Lysy, (Alternate), **Secretary** RRPDC
Champe Burnley Virginia Bicycling Federation and RABA CTAC Member
Thelma D. Drake..... VDRPT
John Easter Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce
Christine Fix..... VDRPT Consultant
Daniel T. Grinnell VDOT
Kevin B. Page VDRPT
Daniel L. Plaugher VHSR
James P. Ponticello VDOT
Mark Riblett (Alternate) VDOT
Ronald Svejkovsky VDOT
Anne Darby RRPDC
Chuck Gates RRPDC
Jin Lee RRPDC
Barbara Nelson..... RRPDC
Sharon Robeson RRPDC
Greta Ryan RRPDC
Randy Selleck RRPDC
Sarah Stewart RRPDC
Matt Weaver..... RRPDC
Kathy Wright RRPDC
Lee Yolton RRPDC

CALL TO ORDER

MPO Chairman Patricia S. O'Bannon called the February 11, 2010 meeting of the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to order at approximately 3:05 p.m. in the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission Board Room.

MEETING QUORUM

MPO Secretary Daniel N. Lysy reported that a quorum was present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag.

I. ADMINISTRATION

A. Additions to MPO Agenda –

There were no requests for additions to the agenda.

B. Minutes of the November 12, 2009 MPO Meeting –

On motion of George M. Homewood, seconded by Daniel A. Gecker, the minutes of the November 12, 2009 MPO meeting were unanimously approved as presented.

C. Open Public Comment Period –

There were no requests to address the MPO.

D. MPO Chairman's Report –

Chairman O'Bannon had no report.

E. RRPDC Transportation Director's Report –

1. Completed RSTP and CMAQ Projects Reconciliation –

Mr. Lysy reported that the reconciliation process for Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funds, which began in April 2007, has been brought to resolution. He said approximately \$5 million in RSTP funds and \$716,000 in CMAQ funds, a total of about \$5.8 million, have been transferred from completed projects and reallocated to current projects. Mr. Lysy noted the report included in the agenda package.

2. ARRA Project Status –

a. Letter from Congressman Oberstar on ARRA/RSTP Projects Status –

Mr. Lysy reported that staff received a letter from Congressman Oberstar, Chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, requesting that MPOs coordinate with their governor's office to ensure receipt by the twentieth day of each month specific transparency and accountability information about ARRA funds suballocated to the MPO. Mr. Lysy said staff has communicated with VDOT that posting such information on the VDOT web site satisfies that requirement; however, VDOT has not kept this information up to date with the latest posting dated in November 2009. Tom Hawthorne, VDOT Richmond District Administrator, stated that

he is working with the VDOT Programming Division to have that information updated.

- b. ARRA Projects Tracking Sheet: VDOT Report –**
Mr. Lysy noted inclusion of this report in the agenda package under tab two.
- c. ARRA Projects Tracking Sheet: GRTC Report –**
Mr. Lysy noted inclusion of this report in the agenda package under tab two.
- d. Letter from VDOT Acting Commissioner Whirley on Obligation of ARRA Funds and Response Letter from MPO Chairman O'Bannon –**
Mr. Lysy reported receipt of a letter from VDOT Acting Commissioner Whirley on obligation of ARRA funds for MPO projects and has included both the letter and the documentation responding to that letter in the agenda package under tab two. He said two of the three projects have been obligated and staff has been assured that the third project, a Chesterfield project, will be obligated very soon.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. EDAC Membership Limitation for the Private, For-Profit Transportation Operator Member –

Mr. Lysy reviewed action at the November 12 MPO meeting to approve a resolution regarding reorganization of Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee (EDAC) membership, but deferring action on the resolution addressing addition of a private, for-profit transportation operator as an at-large member for clarification of qualifications for that membership position, ensuring that position would not be eligible to serve as chairman or vice chairman of EDAC. Mr. Lysy said the resolution has been revised to address concerns expressed by legal counsel in November and is presented in tab three of the agenda package for MPO consideration.

On motion of Joseph B. Walton, seconded by Kathy C. Graziano, the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization unanimously approved the following resolution:

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) that leadership of the Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee (EDAC) come from those member organizations that represent the elderly, disabled and persons of low income; it is therefore

RESOLVED, that the private, for-profit transportation operator at-large Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee (EDAC) member cannot hold the office of either EDAC Chairman or EDAC Vice Chairman.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. MPO Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee (EDAC) Meeting Report –

Chairman O'Bannon recognized EDAC Chairman Linda Broady-Myers and congratulated her for her election as President of the GRTC Board of Directors. Ms. Broady-Myers said she had nothing to add to the EDAC report on the January 27 EDAC meeting included in the agenda package under tab four.

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

In the absence of CTAC Chairman Steve Adkins, Barbara Nelson, lead staff for CTAC, provided a brief report on items included under tab five in the agenda package report from the November 24, 2009 and January 26, 2010 CTAC meetings. Ms. Nelson also briefly reported on topics for the upcoming February 23 CTAC meeting.

C. Approval of Federal Rail Stimulus Funds for the Washington, D.C. to Richmond High Speed Rail Corridor and Other Virginia Projects –

Chairman O'Bannon introduced Thelma D. Drake, recently appointed Director of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT), and Kevin B. Page, Chief of Rail Transportation for VDRPT. Chairman O'Bannon invited Ms. Drake to address the MPO and Ms. Drake said she appreciates this opportunity to meet members of the Richmond Area MPO and, along with others at VDRPT, she looks forward to working with the MPO and she thanked the MPO for its work.

Kevin Page provided a brief PowerPoint update on high speed rail saying Virginia received \$75 million in ARRA funds for high speed rail development for its Round 1, Track 1.a. project to construct an 11.4-mile section of third main line track between Arkendale and Powell's Point, a major choke point between Fredericksburg and Washington, D.C. Mr. Page said this was the only shovel-ready project Virginia had to submit when applications were due. He briefly reviewed other priority rail projects in Virginia, funding awards, and additional funding to be available, along with next steps and rail challenges and opportunities in Virginia. Mr. Page concluded that this is the beginning of a sustainable federal rail program for which additional federal funding and new sources may become available in the next few months. He said Virginia continues

to advance key rail projects and to apply for all sources of available federal funds and has demonstrated its ability to execute agreements with host railroads to start new service quickly. He said support from elected officials at all levels will be critical to ensuring that Virginia receives federal funds in the future. Mr. Page answered questions with the following major points being made:

- When the 30 percent design phase is complete (in the next 30 to 60 days), the Fredericksburg to South Richmond rail line with CSX, a \$14 million rail enhancement fund initiative, will be shovel-ready to submit for consideration in the next round of project funding.
- The \$8 billion in ARRA funds available for rail projects focused on employment through shovel-ready rail projects that would put people back to work quickly in addition to providing increased connectivity.
- CSX is a willing partner in allowing passenger rail at 90 mph with the appropriate signalization and safety appliances on a three-track system using all three tracks, which was paramount for advancing the Arkendale to Powell's Point project for funding.

D. Richmond/Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Project Draft Tier I EIS –

Mr. Page provided a PowerPoint presentation on the *Richmond to Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Project Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)*. Mr. Page said that today is the very last day for the public comment period on this federal report document developed in partnership with FRA and VDRPT. Mr. Page said two routes, the Peninsula/CXST (northern) route and the Southside/NS route, and five alternatives with varied routes, frequencies and speeds were evaluated. He said key evaluation criteria included independent utility (no dependence on other routes or projects), travel time, projected ridership, estimated capital cost, estimated operating cost, cost effectiveness and environmental considerations. Results of public and agency input are also being considered for the final Tier I EIS document. Mr. Page reviewed key findings and provided an overview of next steps. He said the summary of all public meetings and comments will be presented at the February 17 CTB Workshop and that Ms. Drake will take a preferred alternative recommendation to the February CTB meeting for approval. Following that meeting, VDRPT will apply for Round 2 Track 2 ARRA funds to advance the preferred alternative and will continue work to finalize the Final Tier I EIS for FRA approval, hoping to receive a Record of Decision by the end of this calendar year in order to become eligible for the next levels of federal funding. Mr. Page offered to answer questions and the following major points were brought forward.

- The VDRPT priority is building Richmond to Petersburg as part of the Washington, D.C. to Richmond to Petersburg network prior to building the Richmond to Hampton Roads selected alternative.

- While federal funds may be used for capital expenditures, Virginia needs to identify a dedicated funding source to sustain state-funded passenger rail operations.
- Passenger rail ridership revenues may, on some routes, cover operational expenses, but when capital equipment and capital maintenance expenses are added, passenger rail is a subsidy operation.
- Rail and highways are not either/or independent modes, but are a collaborative effort. Funds used for rail development are not eligible for highway construction and will not reduce funds available for I-64 core corridor improvement.
- The Draft EIS does not address noise and vibration to the decibel level and that will be addressed in the Tier 2 level EIS document.
- At-grade crossings and signal system improvements to accommodate higher speed trains were priced into the cost estimates.

Two resolutions supporting high speed rail development were distributed for MPO consideration. Mr. Lysy said the revised staff resolution was originally distributed to the MPO on February 4 and is presented again today (green paper) along with a revised version of a proposed New Kent County resolution (blue paper) (initial version was distributed to the MPO on February 8). He said RRPDC and VDRPT staffs worked with New Kent County representatives and they are all supportive of the revised New Kent resolution. Mr. Lysy read the Synopsis and Goals Stated, included with the revised New Kent resolution and RRPDC Executive Director Bob Crum reviewed the action statements of the resolution. New Kent County MPO member Stran Trout commented that the New Kent resolution provides more detail on how improved, existing Peninsula rail service might be utilized and noted that development of the southern route requires significant funding and will come further in the future. Daniel Plaugher said Virginians for High Speed Rail strongly supports the MPO resolution noting the importance of improved high speed rail service to the Richmond Region. VDRPT Director Thelma Drake said the language in this resolution clearly shows the MPO's vision and goals for the future and said the resolution does not limit or hinder development, but allows rail development to move ahead now with support of Alternative One.

On motion by George W. Homewood, seconded by Robert R. Setliff, the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization unanimously approved the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION REAFFIRMING SUPPORT
FOR THE EXTENSION OF HIGH SPEED RAIL
TO THE RICHMOND REGION
AND
IN SUPPORT OF ENHANCED AND HIGH SPEED RAIL
BETWEEN RICHMOND AND HAMPTON ROADS**

WHEREAS, the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (RAMPO) is a strong supporter of extending high speed rail service from the Washington Metropolitan Area to the Richmond Region; and

WHEREAS, the Hampton Roads Region is home to over 1.5 million Virginians whose use of high speed rail would increase ridership on routes through the Richmond Region; and

WHEREAS, the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization and the Tri-Cities Area Metropolitan Planning Organization have expressed support for Alternative One of the Richmond/Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Project Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Statement;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the RAMPO reaffirms its strong support for the extension of high speed rail service from the Washington Metropolitan Area to the Richmond Region, followed thereafter by high speed rail service from Richmond east to the Hampton Roads Region and south along the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the RAMPO supports the development of high speed rail service capable of speeds of more than 110 miles per hour along the US-460 corridor connecting Richmond to Norfolk; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the RAMPO supports enhancing passenger rail service connecting Richmond to Hampton Roads along the Peninsula's I-64 corridor, including improving access, reliability, and on-time performance to existing conventional intercity passenger rail service, as well as establishing new intra-regional commuter rail with service to Providence Forge, Richmond International Airport and other potential locations along the corridor; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the RAMPO believes that establishing a dedicated passenger track along the Peninsula's I-64 corridor alignment will improve both passenger and freight service and reliability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the RAMPO endorses the locations and service frequencies for high speed rail proposed in Alternative One of the Richmond/Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Project Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Statement as most closely achieving these goals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the RAMPO urges the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation to move forward as quickly as possible to complete all plans and programs for high speed rail service

in the Washington, D.C. to Richmond Region corridor to be well positioned to receive favorable consideration for any available federal funds; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the RAMPO pledges to assist the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation in its efforts to secure funding for high speed rail service throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

E. I-295/Meadowville Road Interchange Air Quality Conformity Analysis and TIP Amendment Request –

Barbara Nelson referred the MPO to the resolution presented for its consideration on page two, tab eight of the agenda package. She explained that the I-295/Meadowville Road Interchange project was included in the *MPO 2009 Regional Priority Projects* report as well as the *2031 Long-Range Transportation Plan*, but it was included for analysis for air quality conformity and fiscal constraint in the last year of the LRTP. Ms. Nelson said that due to changes in funding, Chesterfield County requested that this project be advanced now, which requires a new air quality conformity analysis as well as an amendment to include it in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). She said the air quality conformity analysis is complete and the Executive Summary of the analysis is included on pages seven through 14 of agenda package tab eight, and VDOT Environmental staff is present to answer questions. Ms. Nelson noted that a required two-week public comment period was held January 25 through February 9 with one public comment received from the Chesterfield County Chamber of Commerce in support of the project. Ms. Nelson offered to answer questions and there were none.

On motion of Daniel A. Gecker, seconded by Marleen K. Durfee, the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization unanimously approved the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) finds the proposed amendment to the FY 2009 – FY 2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to add the I-295/Meadowville Road Interchange project (UPC #70550) to be in conformance with all applicable air quality conformity analysis requirements and hereby amends the FY 09 – FY 12 TIP to include the I-295/Meadowville Road Interchange project as presented.

F. I-64 Connector Designation for America's Marine Highway –

Barbara Nelson noted the resolution under tab nine of the agenda package for MPO consideration in support of designating the I-64/James River corridor as an America's Marine Highway connector. Ms. Nelson

provided background on the America's Marine Highway program and designation of America's Marine Highway corridors as a component of the national transportation system noting that in May 2009 the MPO endorsed the designation of the I-95 corridor as an Atlantic Coast corridor under the America's Marine Highway program. She said the I-64/James River corridor provides a connectivity opportunity between the terminals in Hampton Roads and the Port of Richmond and designation as an America's Marine Highway Corridor by US DOT makes projects within the corridor eligible for funding for new, expanded or enhanced projects. Ms. Nelson stated that according to barge service customer demands, the barge runs anywhere from one to three times a week noting that the barge is supported through CMAQ demonstration funds.

On motion of Viktoria W. Badger, seconded by Joseph Andrews, Jr., the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization unanimously approved the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 required the US Secretary of Transportation to establish a short sea transportation program to mitigate landside congestion; and

WHEREAS, the US Maritime Administration's *America's Marine Highway Program* is designed to integrate our coastal and inland waterways into the nation's surface transportation system, and to reduce congestion, improve air quality and provide other public benefits by supporting the increased use of these waterways; and

WHEREAS, the US Department of Transportation published an interim final rule on October 9, 2008, establishing a framework to provide federal support to expand the use of America's Marine Highway; and

WHEREAS, one of the four primary components of the framework includes the designation of Marine Highway Corridors; and

WHEREAS, a Marine Highway Corridor consists of one or more navigable inland or intracoastal waterways, coastal waters, or portions thereof that can provide an alternative to specific road or rail corridors for freight and passenger transportation; and

WHEREAS, a proposed Marine Highway Project must be a new, expanded or enhanced water transportation service along one or more designated Marine Highway Corridors that serve as an intermodal extension of the surface transportation system; and

WHEREAS, approved projects will receive US Maritime Administration support through promotion of the service, coordination of federal agency

involvement, identification of funding sources and impediments, and encouragement of the use of the proposed services; and

WHEREAS, the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization endorsed the designation of the I-95 Corridor as the Atlantic Coast Corridor under the US Department of Transportation *America's Marine Highway Program* on May 14, 2009; and

WHEREAS, the James River, an historic marine corridor in the settlement and development of commerce in Virginia, continues today as a viable component of the surface transportation system, paralleling Interstate 64 and connecting with the Interstate 95 corridor; and

WHEREAS, the use of the James River should be expanded and enhanced as an alternative to road or rail corridors for freight transportation to mitigate congestion, reduce environmental impacts and energy consumption, enhance safety, provide a sustainable improvement in the overall capacity of the national freight transportation system and provide other public benefits;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization endorses the designation of the I-64/James River corridor by the U.S. Department of Transportation as an America's Marine Highway connecting the terminals and commerce in the Hampton Roads and Richmond regions.

G. "64 Express" James River Barge Project –

Barbara Nelson provided a brief update on progress of the "64 Express," the James River Barge service, noting that it completed its first year of service in December of 2009 running between the terminals in the Hampton Roads area and the Port of Richmond (POR) on a regular basis from one to three times a week. Ms. Nelson reviewed the regional goal of mitigating congestion impacts associated with the increased movement of goods within the corridor providing environmental and economic benefits to the region and said the project exceeded the first-year performance target by more than 60 percent. She said the project continues to meet the challenges of providing a reliable, cost-competitive, flexible alternative to the truck-only mode to increase capacity within the system, while acknowledging that trucks will always be a key component of the modal mix. Ms. Nelson reviewed the history of the project noting the concept was first introduced in fall 2008 by then Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Maritime Administration, Sean Connaughton, who is now Virginia Secretary of Transportation. Ms. Nelson said benefits to the region resulting from this project include documented fuel consumption savings, and increased operational, capacity, and maintenance highway system performance. She said the opportunity exists for development of an inland

port creating opportunities for distribution centers within the Richmond Region similar to the Virginia Inland Port in Front Royal. Ms. Nelson said the Virginia Port Authority projects the volume of cargoes coming through their terminals will more than double by 2030 and that an additional 20 to 60 million square feet of distribution center and warehousing space will be required in order to absorb that additional cargo. Ms. Nelson noted that staff and consultants are working on a regional intermodal study which should provide strategies and recommendations for both policy and infrastructure investment and noted that 11 of the infrastructure projects being recommended by the study are recommended in the corridor adjacent to or within close proximity of the Port. Ms. Nelson said the Port is working to provide a direct Norfolk Southern rail connection to the POR and currently has direct access to CSX through Deepwater Terminal rail. Ms. Nelson offered to answer questions and there were none.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

No items were brought forward for consideration.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman O'Bannon noted that due to business the City of Richmond may need to present, the March 11 MPO meeting is not cancelled at this time as previously recommended. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:35 p.m.