

**RICHMOND AREA  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
2031 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

**PART 1**

**INTRODUCTION**



# Chapter 1 – Introduction

## Background

The movement of people and goods is, to a great extent, regional. People often live in one locality and commute to another. A wide variety of goods and commodities are distributed from centrally located warehouses to retail outlets within a metropolitan area. Various business, medical, educational and other services are oriented towards meeting the needs of a metropolitan area market, which requires access and mobility at a regional level.

The Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (RAMPO) 2031 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) serves as the framework for developing a regionally based network of transportation facilities and services that meets the travel needs of the region in an efficient and effective manner. The purpose of the 2031 LRTP is to set forth a vision of how the region will invest in the transportation system, accomplished by including long and short range program strategies, actions and projects. As required by Federal law, the LRTP is updated every four years to ensure consistency with changes in land use, demographic, and transportation characteristics. The LRTP includes a planning horizon of at least 20 years. The LRTP includes transportation projects that can reasonably be accomplished given the region's financial resources and environmental constraints. For transportation projects to be eligible for federal funding, they must first appear in the LRTP.

Basic mobility needs of the local population are accomplished through a network of roadways, transit routes, pedestrian and bicycle paths, paratransit services, transportation demand management options, and other systems that facilitate the movement of people. Often these ways, routes, paths, services, options, and systems can be contained on the same facility, providing local residents multiple options to make all types of work, social, recreational, and educational trips. As the population and demographics of the Richmond region transition over time, the transportation system needs to diversify (i.e., mobility options and services) to help ensure adequate access and mobility for all residents of the region.

In addition to planning for the efficient movement of people throughout the region, it is also important to provide for transportation modes for the movement of goods. The need for fast and efficient connectivity of goods from shippers to rail, air, port, and truck terminals must be considered to help ensure a strong and vibrant regional economy. The complexity of these connections continues to evolve in the Richmond region. Often, the transportation network must accommodate the transfer of goods from one mode to another. Thus the transportation system must integrate intermodal connectivity into the framework of the Richmond region's transportation network.

A high-quality transportation network that provides for the efficient movement of people and goods cannot be accomplished without a well thought out long-range plan. The plan is developed by a Long-Range Transportation Plan Advisory Task Force, comprised of citizens and representatives of transportation agencies and local governments, through a process of review, comment, and revision until the Task Force is satisfied that the plan best meets the needs of the region. The list of Advisory Task Force members is provided on the inside cover of this document.

Local government comprehensive plans provide a starting point for the process because they identify the location of future growth and development. Local governments, major transportation user groups, and transportation service providers then examine needs to determine how the transportation network will accommodate this growth and development. The LRTP then seeks to identify transportation facilities and services that will be needed to maintain safe and efficient mobility and access to meet the needs of the future. Once a list of projects is compiled, the lists are submitted for public review and comment. With lists and comments received, the Advisory Task Force then reviews the information, determines expected funding up to the plan horizon, and revises the list to meet air quality, environmental justice, financial constraint, and public input requirements.

Many of the projects listed in this plan are carried over from the previous 2026 LRTP adopted in 2004. The 2031 LRTP contains updated goals, objectives, and strategies and re-examines project needs based on updated financial, demographic, and project cost information. In accord with federal planning regulations, estimated project costs include an analysis of inflation trends to realistically constrain the resources anticipated to be available over the next twenty years.

## **The Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization**

MPOs are designated under Section 134 of Title 23, U.S. Code, for maintaining and conducting a “continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive” (3-C) regional transportation process that results in plans and programs consistent with adopted plans for development of the metropolitan area. Census defined urbanized areas of 50,000 or greater in population are designated as MPOs. The Governor, with the concurrence of area local governments, is charged with designating the MPO’s member organizations. The Richmond Area MPO (RAMPO) also is designated as a Transportation Management Area (TMA), creating additional requirements for transportation planning. Like many metropolitan areas, the RAMPO encompasses several jurisdictions, each with their own comprehensive plans and transportation programs. To help ensure that each jurisdiction within the metropolitan area receives equal consideration in transportation decision making, many states have designated a regional planning commission or district to serve as the MPO’s administrative staff.

The RAMPO is a policy-making organization made up of local elected officials and technical staff from each of the region’s nine member jurisdictions. Membership in the RAMPO also includes state and federal transportation agencies, area transportation service/system operators, and the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission (RRPDC) (see Figure 1-1). The RRPDC serves as lead staff providing administrative and technical services for the RAMPO. In addition, the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation provide additional technical support.

The RAMPO serves as the forum for cooperative regional decision-making. The RAMPO is required to carry out metropolitan transportation planning in cooperation with the state and transit providers. The RAMPO develops the region’s transportation plans and programs, and approves the LRTP which is a prerequisite for the allocation of federal-aid highway and transit funds. The development of an efficient and effective multi-modal transportation network is essential for the region if it is to sustain a strong economy, clean environment, and high quality of life standards.

**Figure 1-1: Member Jurisdictions and Agencies of the  
Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization**

<b><u>Jurisdictions (Voting Members)</u></b>	<b><u>Agencies (Voting Members)</u></b>
County of Charles City (1)	Capital Region Airport Commission (1)
County of Chesterfield (4)	GRTC Transit System (1)
County of Goochland (2)	Richmond Metropolitan Authority (1)
County of Hanover (3)	Richmond Regional Planning District Commission (1)
County of Henrico (4)	Virginia Department of Transportation (1)
County of New Kent (2)	
County of Powhatan (2)	
City of Richmond (4)	
Town of Ashland (1)	
<b><u>Non-Voting Members</u></b>	
Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee Chairman (1)	
Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee Chairman (1)	
Federal Highway Administration (1)	
Federal Transit Administration (1)	
MPO Chairman’s Citizen Appointees (2)	
RideFinders (1)	
Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (1)	
Virginia Department of Aviation (1)	
(Number of members noted in parenthesis)	

## **MPO Study Area**

Under federal requirements, the study area for the Richmond Area MPO, must encompass both the existing urbanized area and contiguous area expected to become urbanized during the time period covered by the Long-Range Transportation Plan (for this document the horizon year is 2031). It must also cover areas designated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Clean Air Act as part of the attainment/maintenance area for air quality standards (currently designated as a maintenance area for ozone air quality standards). To ensure that the plan covers all urbanized areas, attainment/maintenance areas, and areas expected to become urbanized by 2031, the study area has been defined to include:

- Hanover County
- Henrico County
- Town of Ashland
- City of Richmond
- A majority of Chesterfield County (The portion of Chesterfield County not included in the Richmond Area MPO is contained in the Tri-Cities Area MPO study area. This includes those areas of Chesterfield County near Hopewell, Colonial Heights, and Petersburg.)
- A portion of Charles City County
- A portion of Goochland County
- A portion of New Kent County
- A portion of Powhatan County

The Richmond MPO 2031 study area and designated urbanized area boundaries are shown in Map 1-1.

The RAMPO encompasses an important crossroads for the Mid-Atlantic states. Interstate 95 (I-95) passes through the Richmond region and is the major north-south connector on the east coast. Interstate 64 (I-64) passes through the region and intersects I-95 near downtown Richmond. I-64 is an important east-west connector that provides access to Hampton Roads as well as to points across the country. Other important highways within the region include Interstate 295, which forms a semi-circle bypass for the northern and eastern portions of the region, connecting I-64 to I-95 near Ashland on the north and to I-95 on the south side of Petersburg. Virginia Route 288 forms a bypass for the southern and western portions of the region, connecting I-64 to I-95 through Goochland, Powhatan and Chesterfield counties. In the City of Richmond, Interstate 195 connects I-64 and I-95 to the Powhite Parkway and the Downtown Expressway. In Henrico County, Interstate 895 provides an east-west link between I-95 and I-295. In Chesterfield County, the Powhite Parkway and Chippenham Parkway serve as major linkage highways connecting the county to the City of Richmond, Henrico County, and to I-95. U.S. primary routes, including U.S. Routes 1, 33, 60, 250, 301 and U.S. Route 360, are an integral part of the region's roadway network.

The Richmond region is served by an inland deepwater port on the James River that connects regional goods with markets in ports as far away as Europe, Africa, Asia, and South America. Passenger and air cargo service is offered through the Richmond International Airport located in eastern Henrico County. Major rail facilities are owned and operated by CSX and Norfolk Southern and radiate out in all directions connecting Richmond with major U.S. markets including Washington, D.C. and other northeast corridor cities, as well as Charlotte and Atlanta.

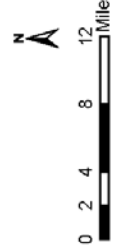
Amtrak provides passenger train service to Washington, D.C. and points north to Boston, east to Newport News, west to Chicago, and south to Florida. Higher speed rail service from Main Street Station in downtown Richmond to Union Station in Washington, D.C. is currently under development.

**Map 1 - 1  
Richmond  
Area MPO  
Study Area  
Boundary\***

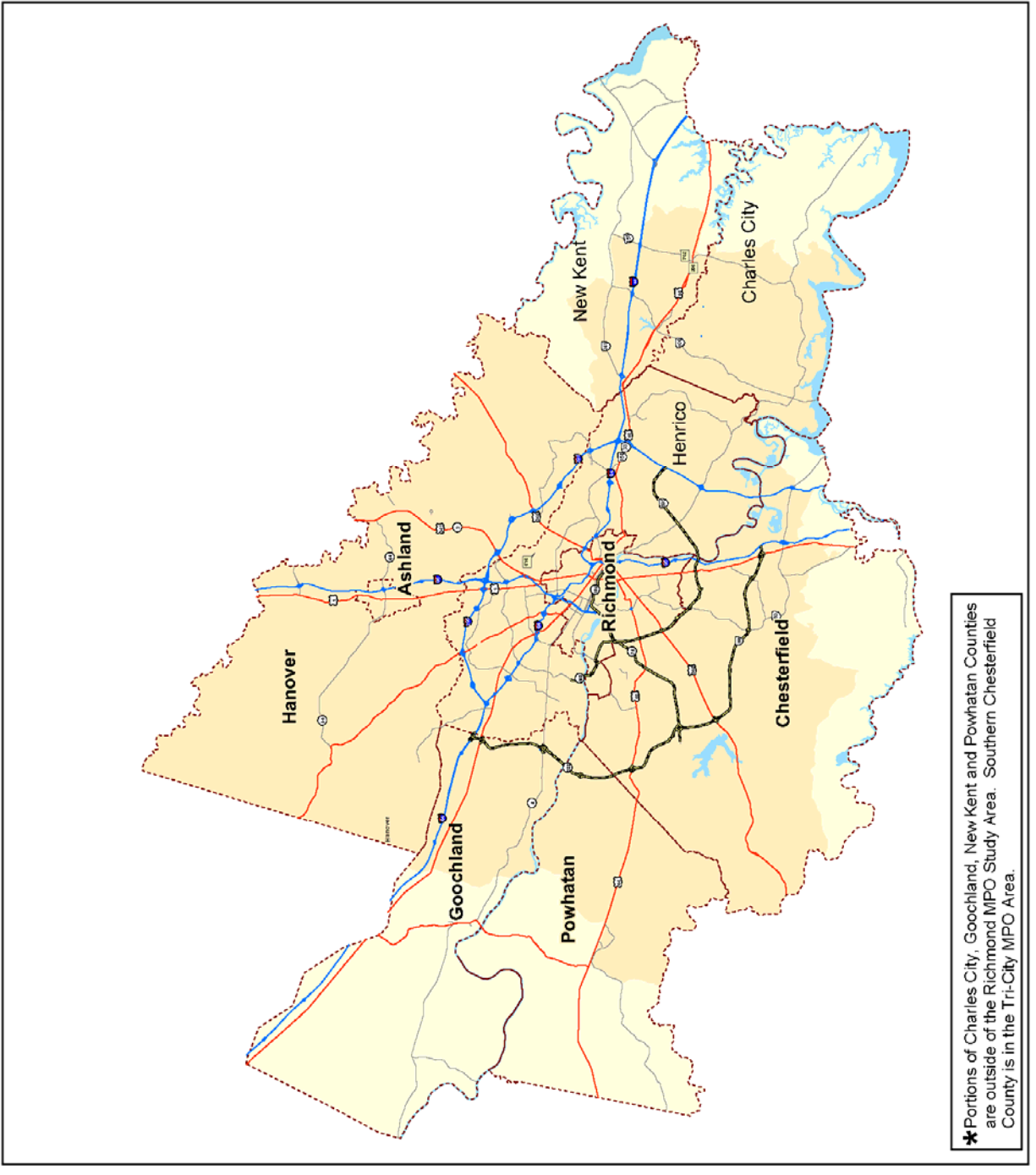


**Road Network**

- Interstate
- Expressway
- Highway
- Major Road
- Jurisdictional Boundary
- Rivers, Lakes
- MPO Study Area



Prepared by: Richmond Regional Planning District  
 Commission, May 2008  
 Sources: US Census, 2000  
 Virginia Department of Transportation, 2007  
 Richmond Regional PDC, 2008



\*Portions of Charles City, Goochland, New Kent and Powhatan Counties are outside of the Richmond MPO Study Area. Southern Chesterfield County is in the Tri-City MPO Area.