

**2031 Long-Range Transportation Plan
Advisory Committee Meeting
Richmond Regional Planning District Commission
December 11, 2007**

MEETING ATTENDEES

Viktoria Badger – City of Richmond
Scott Clark – GRTC Transit System
Tom Coleman – Goochland County
Todd Eure – Henrico County
Larry Hagin – GRTC Transit System
Meredith Judy– VDRPT
Adele MacLean – CTAC -- VCN
Liz McAdory -- VDOT
Mark Riblett -- VDOT
Dan Grinnell – VDOT
Paul Grossman – EDAC – Pow/Gooch CAA
Dan Johnson – EDAC –AARP
Jim Kennedy -- RMA
Ivan Rucker -- FHWA
Stephen Story – James River Buslines
Joe Vidunas – Hanover County (Chairman)
Lloyd Vye – CTAC – RABA (Vice-Chairman)
John Zeugner – VCN
Lee Yolton - Richmond Regional Planning District Commission
Dan Lysy - Richmond Regional Planning District Commission
Barbara Nelson -- Richmond Regional Planning District Commission
Archita Rajbhandary – Richmond Regional Planning District Commission
Jin Lee – Richmond Regional Planning District Commission
Anne Darby – RRPDC Intern

MEETING NOTES

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Vidunas at approximately 9:10 am.

Administration: The Advisory Committee (the “Committee”) approved the agenda for the meeting as presented in the packet mailed beforehand.

The Committee had no revisions or corrections to the December 5 meeting notes as presented.

During the public comment period several persons spoke: Mr. Story of James River Buslines emphasized that it was important to encourage high occupancy vehicle use. This, however, is a challenge and would require a substantial marketing/public relations effort. Dan Johnson, EDAC member, noted that it is critical to design new transport systems that can accommodate the needs of the elderly and disabled. Paul Grossman, EDAC member, noted that rural areas have unmet needs for transportation services for the elderly and disabled; that in these areas, transportation for medical purposes is about the only service available and that more funding is needed.

Business:

Mr. Yolton stated that, in the nature of old business, there remained a question about the radical fluctuation in the forecasted revenue for highway construction. He asked Mr. Riblett if he could address this question, and Mr. Riblett stated that the large fluctuation in revenue was mostly accounted for by the category of interstate funds.

Mr. Riblett noted that during the first few years of the forecast (i.e., through 2013), huge projects in the Northern Virginia region such as the Springfield interchange and the Wilson bridge required a large portion of statewide interstate construction funds. Whereas after 2013, the amount of interstate

construction funds available to the Richmond area would resume a more normal pattern. The Committee discussed potential competition from other areas of the state for these funds; for instance in the Hampton Roads area for new projects, other potential projects in Northern Virginia, and the widening of I-81 in the western portion of the state. Mr. Riblett noted that the Committee could use a more conservative estimate, or ask that the forecast for interstate funds be reviewed by VDOT, but the Committee acted unanimously on a motion to use the current VDOT forecast for purposes of producing the constrained 2031 LRTP project list.

Mr. Vidunas suggested that the Committee may wish to consider a contingency account rather than fully allocate all the funds to specific projects.

Mr. Yolton showed a slide at this point depicting the allocation of funds for various categories of projects in the 2026 LRTP. A Committee member suggested that the amount of funds allocated for highway maintenance should also be included in the slide.

Mr. Hagin started his presentation (Item #6 on the agenda) regarding new transit-oriented proposals for the region to be considered for inclusion in the 2031 LRTP. There were two components to this proposal – a new Bus Transfer Center and the beginning of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service. Mr. Hagin described how, as a result of the nearly complete Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) being conducted by GRTC, bus service would continue principally as a “hub and spoke” system for the foreseeable future. This means that most bus service in our area usually travels along Broad Street in the City, and as a result, the current and logical future transfer location is the Broad Street corridor in the vicinity of 8th and Broad.

As a result, GRTC is proposing that a new bus transfer center be constructed in this vicinity. A modern bus transfer facility, similar to the one in place in Charlotte, NC, would be a great improvement to the riders, and address ongoing concerns about bus related congestion (both vehicles and riders) along the Broad Street corridor. Mr. Hagin also noted that an option being looked at was multiple transfer centers rather than one.

The next portion of Mr. Hagin’s presentation addressed BRT. Mr. Hagin noted that BRT can be implemented for a fraction of the cost of a light rail system. BRT needs to include a strong identity and branding as a separate service and the concept of a transfer center/station is integral to the proposal. BRT has fewer (but more substantial) stops, passengers pay fares prior to boarding, and often the vehicles are equipped with “smart bus” technologies. The Phase I proposal for BRT service is from Willow Lawn to the downtown transfer center. The funding for such a project would require a grant application to the FTA for the program entitled “Very Small Starts” that is available for qualifying transit proposals under \$50 million. Mr. Hagin noted the city of Cleveland OH is engaged in a similar project.

Committee members asked several questions about the presentation including BRT provisions for bicyclists and the elderly and disabled. Also, whether small businesses could locate at the transfer center. Mr. Hagin noted that the “Small Starts” program requires a 50% match from state/local sources, and that GRTC may apply to the state for money for preliminary engineering (PE). Mr. Yolton noted that there was a handout on the table showing the projections through 2031 for transit oriented revenues, which forecast was prepared as part of the Regional Mass Transit Study.

The next presenter was Joe Vidunas representing Hanover County. Mr. Vidunas circulated a handout regarding the proposed reconstruction/upgrade of the interchange at I-95 and Lewistown Road. The Lewistown Road Interchange Bridge was constructed by a private entity around 1962, and at this point in time, is inadequate from a capacity and safety standpoint. This is particularly true given that the immediate area is a planned economic development center where a new facility is being constructed by Bass Pro Shops.

Mr. Vidunas stated that the proposed Bass Pro Shop is an attraction that could draw as many as 3 million visitors a year once completed. Hanover County had recently given a tour of the vicinity to state and federal elected officials to describe the economic development potential of the area and to point out the need for a new interchange at Lewistown Road.

Mr. Vidunas noted that while the project is listed in the current 2026 LRTP, funds are shown only for PE. At this juncture, Hanover would like to include additional funds in the LRTP for right-of-way and construction. A Committee member noted that funding for the interchange probably would come from a mix of funding sources. Mr. Vidunas stated that the area is a designated CDA, and that \$26 million would be available from bond funds associated with the CDA. The Bass Pro facility would generate significant state and local tax revenues. He estimated the total project cost from \$50-70 million, and that the bridge alone is estimated at \$10 million for reconstruction. Ms. Badger asked whether federal bridge funds would be used and Mr. Riblett stated he would research the answer to that question.

There were no other presentations given on proposed projects for inclusion in the 2031 LRTP and the Committee discussed whether there should be a cut off date for new proposals. It was determined that, until the available revenues were calculated in accordance with the agreed upon methodology, it would be premature to set a cut off date for new project proposals.

Under the "Other Business" category on the agenda, the Committee was reminded that information is still being sought on the amount of private/local (P/L) revenue sources to be included in the funding estimate. This is one of the requirements set forth in SAFETEA-LU metropolitan planning regulations. Staff will transmit a "reminder" email on this matter to appropriate Committee members.

Next Meeting/Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:50 am. The next meeting is scheduled for January 7, 2008 at 1:30 pm.