

RICHMOND AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES OF MEETING

October 13, 2005

MEMBERS PRESENT

REPRESENTING

Malvern R. Butler, Chairman	County of Goochland
Robert R. Setliff, Vice Chairman	County of Hanover
Viktoria Badger (Alternate).....	City of Richmond
James R. Banks (Alternate).....	County of Chesterfield
Rebecca Draper.....	County of Hanover
Ralph J. "Joe" Emerson.....	County of Henrico
E. Todd Eure.....	County of Henrico
Paul E. Fisher.....	RRPDC
Lawrence C. Hagin (Alternate).....	GRTC Transit System
Malcolm H. Hines (Nonvoting).....	CTAC
Russell E. Holland.....	County of Powhatan
Michael Holmes.....	County of Charles City
James B. Kennedy (Alternate).....	RMA
Joseph T. Lacy.....	County of Goochland
Patricia O'Bannon.....	County of Henrico
William Pantele.....	City of Richmond
Mark Riblett (Alternate).....	VDOT
Barbara K. Smith (Alternate).....	County of Chesterfield
Frank Thornton.....	County of Henrico
Von Tisdale (Nonvoting).....	RideFinders
Stran L. Trout.....	County of New Kent
Carson L. Tucker.....	County of Powhatan
Joseph E. Vidunas (Alternate).....	County of Hanover

MEMBERS ABSENT

REPRESENTING

Jack E. Apostolides (Nonvoting).....	VDRPT
Edward Barber.....	County of Chesterfield
Robert M. Berry.....	RMA
Linda G. Broady-Myers (Nonvoting).....	EDAC
Cliff Burnette (Nonvoting).....	VDA
John Gordon.....	County of Hanover
Thomas A. Hawthorne.....	VDOT
William Henley.....	City of Richmond
George Homewood.....	County of New Kent
Pat Kampf (Nonvoting).....	FTA
R. M. "Dickie" King.....	County of Chesterfield
Angela LaCombe.....	Town of Ashland

MEMBERS ABSENT (Cont.)

REPRESENTING

John M. Lewis.....GRTC Transit System
Sherman W. Litton.....County of Chesterfield
Eugene A. Mason.....City of Richmond
John McCrackenCounty of Chesterfield
Vanloan NguyenCity of Richmond
Ivan Rucker (Nonvoting)FHWA
John Rutledge.....CRAC

OTHERS PRESENT

REPRESENTING

Daniel N. Lysy, **Secretary** (Alternate)..... RRPDC
Jameson Auten RideFinders
Gerald L. Baliles Richmond Transportation Advocacy Board
Nancy Finch Virginians for High Speed Rail
Joan Girone Long & Foster Realtors
Laurie Henley..... VDOT
Jim Dunn Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce
William C. Nelson, Jr. (Nonvoting Alternate)..... CTAC
Lloyd Vye CTAC
David T. Williams (Alternate)County of Powhatan
Christopher L. Winstead VDOT
Mike Clements RRPDC
Geleene Goffena RRPDC
Jin Lee RRPDC
Livingston Lewis RRPDC
Liz McAdory RRPDC
Sharon Robeson RRPDC
Patricia Villa RRPDC

CALL TO ORDER

MPO Chairman Malvern R. “Rudy” Butler called the September 8, 2005 meeting of the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to order at approximately 2:40 P.M. in the large conference room of the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission (RRPDC).

I. ADMINISTRATION

A. Certification by MPO Secretary of Meeting Quorum –

Dan Lysy reported that a quorum was present.

B. Additions to MPO Agenda –

Mr. Lysy said he had no additions to the agenda, but he reported that Siemens Corporation representatives scheduled to make a presentation on high-speed rail development would not be able to attend the meeting. However, Mr. Lysy said Pat O'Bannon would speak to that topic briefly to be followed by a DVD presentation on maglev technology.

C. Minutes of the September 8, 2005 MPO Meeting –

On motion by William Pantele, seconded by Michael Holmes, the September 8, 2005 MPO meeting minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

D. Open Public Comment Period –

Chairman Butler recognized and welcomed former Governor Gerald L. Baliles thanking him for his leadership in addressing transportation issues in the Commonwealth and in the Richmond region. Chairman Butler noted the recent addition of Jet Blue service to the Richmond International Airport saying Governor Baliles worked hard on this effort along with Jim Dunn of the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce to bring this to fruition. Chairman Butler turned the floor over to Governor Baliles.

Governor Baliles thanked Chairman Butler for the opportunity to address the MPO. He noted cooperation between the PDC, the MPO and the Chamber on the Regional Transportation Summit held last spring and the general support of RTAB (Regional Transportation Advocacy Board) for past regional priorities and agreement on many current priorities. However, he noted one exception omitted from the MPO's regional priorities, the need for a regional strategy to address regional comprehensive public transit. Governor Baliles cited a recent business retention report indicating one of the most significant reasons for a company choosing not to remain located in the Richmond area or choosing not to locate here is the limited availability of public transportation. He said a newly released labor market study shows that one of the greatest weaknesses of the Richmond region was the public transportation system's limits on reaching the workforce pool with only 0.8 percent of workers using public transportation to get to work compared to 4.6 percent at the national level, with low use of public transportation attributed to the limited service area of the current system. Governor Baliles said in order to expand our work force and increase our economic development opportunities, the Richmond region must seriously consider the needs of employees and address the need for a regional public transportation system. Governor Baliles requested on behalf of RTAB that the MPO conduct a study to look at developing a regional

comprehensive transit system that could include light rail, trolley cars, and buses to serve an increased area. He said the MPO could render a great service to the region if it would conduct a study to evaluate a regional comprehensive transit system asking such questions as: What is needed?; What would it look like?; and What are the funding options? He said those questions need to be evaluated on a regional level looking at available data and making good projections. Governor Baliles thanked the MPO for its support of RTAB efforts and for time on the agenda to make this request. He said the Chamber appreciates PDC and MPO attendance at the regional summit and informed the MPO that there will be a summit follow-up meeting on Friday, December 2, from 7:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., at the new Riverside on the James Commercial Center.

Chairman Butler thanked Governor Baliles for his comments regarding transportation needs again expressing appreciation for his efforts on behalf of transportation issues across the state. Governor Baliles responded repeating a concern expressed to him that if the next Governor and General Assembly session in 2006 don't address the state's transportation needs, the next available opportunity will be in January 2010 due to upcoming legislature, presidential, and gubernatorial elections and other events that will preclude addressing taxes, deficits, and budgets for five years. He said the question is can we afford to wait.

Chairman Butler asked if there were any questions for Governor Baliles and Vickey Badger inquired about the status of the State Transportation Funds Pilot Grant application for a regional transit study that was submitted last spring. Mr. Lysy advised that the MPO's application was not selected for funding. Further discussion noted the study proposal included GRTC's Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) and both parts of this study were estimated to cost around \$450,000. Governor Baliles indicated that the Chamber could assist in identifying funding sources for such a study. Chairman Butler thanked Governor Baliles saying the MPO would consider the Chamber's request and look for opportunities for partnering on this study.

E. MPO Chairman's Report –

Chairman Butler praised the addition of Jet Blue at Richmond International Airport noting that it will help open up new avenues for economic development. Chairman Butler also noted the positive economic impact of the National Folk Arts Festival held last week in Richmond saying that the festival will return here for two more years.

Chairman Butler thanked former MPO Chairman Russell Holland for his fine service during the previous year and read the resolution of appreciation adopted by the MPO at its July 14, 2005 meeting. Chairman

Butler then presented a framed copy of the resolution and a plaque bearing a gavel and inscription to Mr. Holland as tokens of the MPO's appreciation for his service. Mr. Holland thanked Chairman Butler for his generous comments.

F. RRPDC Transportation Director's Report –

Mr. Lysy had nothing to report.

II. OLD BUSINESS

No old business was brought forward for consideration.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consent Action Items –

1. Consultation Procedures for the Richmond Ozone Nonattainment Area in Support of the Transportation Conformity Regulations –

Dan Lysy asked if there was a request to discuss this item and there was not.

On motion of Robert Setliff, seconded by Rebecca Draper, the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization unanimously approved the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) approves the May 2005 update of the "Consultation Procedures for the Richmond Ozone Nonattainment Area in Support of the Transportation Conformity Regulations" as presented.

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

Noting the absence of EDAC Chairman Linda Broady-Myers, Mr. Lysy gave a brief report on major items considered at the September 28 EDAC meeting. Mr. Lysy noted EDAC's recommendation to the MPO on regional priority projects is included under tab five of the agenda package. EDAC received a presentation and is currently reviewing the draft Public Transportation Needs Assessment Report, along with CTAC and TAC, for comments and revisions before presenting the report to the MPO in December. Mr. Lysy said EDAC also expressed some concern about

being able to attend the Commonwealth Transportation Board's (CTB) Six-Year Improvement Program preallocation meeting in Petersburg and EDAC's suggestion that VDOT consider having a satellite location in Richmond. Mr. Lysy noted that it is likely too late for such an arrangement at this time, but that perhaps VDOT would consider that possibility for future meetings. Chairman Butler observed this is a large district going all the way to the North Carolina line and said he appreciates that it is a difficult task to find a meeting location convenient to all; however, he noted that we need to consider the transportation and mobility needs of the disabled when we plan such important meetings

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

CTAC Chairman Mac Hines reported the CTAC reviewed its previous regional priority transportation projects list and revised it rearranging projects and adding a new project. This list was submitted to the MPO and it is found under tab five of the MPO agenda package. Mr. Hines said CTAC received a presentation and unanimously approved a recommendation with regard to the need to realign the routing for Interstate Bicycle Routes 1 and 76 here in the Richmond region. Mr. Hines introduced Bud Vye, CTAC representative for the Richmond Area Bicycling Association (RABA) for further comment.

Mr. Vye informed the MPO about Interstate Bike Routes 1 and 76 reviewing some of the history noting they were established prior to the Bicentennial in 1976 more than 30 years ago. Mr. Vye said a company in Missoula, Montana, Adventure Cycling, markets maps that are used by people from all over the world who come here to ride across the United States using these maps. Mr. Vye noted that this region is the only area in the country where the two routes intersect for about 10 miles north of Ashland with Interstate Bike Route 1 running north and south from Callas, Maine to Key West, Florida and Interstate Bike Route 76 running from Yorktown, near the Atlantic Ocean, to Astoria, Oregon, one of the first settlements on the west coast near the Pacific Ocean. Mr. Vye reported that over the last 30 years, several problems have developed with the routes due to development. He gave two examples, one where bike Route 1 crosses the James River on the Huguenot Bridge and another where Bike Route 76 bumps into the Powhite Extension and Route 288 without an alternate way to continue on the bike route. Mr. Vye said for Bike Route 1, RABA recommends crossing the James River on the Lee Bridge, going down Riverside Drive and upstream to the other side of the Huguenot Bridge. He said recommendations need to be developed for an alternate route for Bike Route 76.

Mr. Vye said this is a tough bureaucratic task because of the approval process required to change the routes which must be approved by a subcommittee of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) that meets only twice a year. He said he met with Henrico County officials and they suggested bringing the matter to the MPO since it involves several jurisdictions. Mr. Vye said he is requesting that the MPO recommend that appropriate local government TAC members meet with representatives of RABA to work out some changes and take the recommended changes to VDOT for submission to AASHTO to officially change the routes. Mr. Vye said the routes are well marked on all the VDOT maps in the area and the Hanover County leads the region in best marking of the routes. Mr. Vye offered to answer questions and there were none. Chairman Butler noted the resolution contained in the agenda package and called for a motion, second, and action on the motion.

On motion of William Pantele, seconded by Michael Holmes, the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization unanimously approved the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Richmond region is traversed by two major North-South and East-West bicycle routes, Interstate Bicycle Route 1 (North-South) and Interstate Bicycle Route 76 (East-West); and

WHEREAS, conditions along these routes have changed significantly since they were first designated approximately 30 years ago; and

WHEREAS, Interstate Bicycle Routes 1 and 76 are still marketed by national organizations and remain popular among bicycle tourists from across the country; and

WHEREAS, new bicycle route options are necessary due to changes in the region's highway network and development patterns that have occurred since these interstate bicycle routes were established;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) requests that MPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members from those jurisdictions which currently have Interstate Bicycle Routes 1 and 76 within their boundaries (i.e., City of Richmond, Town of Ashland, and counties of Charles City, Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico and Powhatan) meet with the Richmond Area Bicycling Association (RABA) member to the MPO Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) to review Interstate Bicycle Routes 1 and 76 current locations and provide for MPO review and recommendation proposed changes to the location of Interstate Bicycle

Routes 1 and 76 were deemed to be mutually acceptable to the local jurisdiction TAC member and RABA CTAC member; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the MPO recommended changes in alignment for Interstate Bicycle Routes 1 and 76 be submitted for review and approval by the appropriate local government board of supervisors or town/city council; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the MPO recommendation and the action of the appropriate local government board of supervisors and town/city council requesting changes to the Interstate Bicycle Routes 1 and 76 alignment be submitted to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) for its review and final approval.

D. MPO Regional Priority Transportation Projects –

Chairman Butler reviewed the history of the regional priority transportation projects list saying it's a guideline that gives the state a statement on the region's list of priorities, but that some projects have been on the list for years and that, while some projects have been completed, we haven't made much progress on others. Staff passed out copies of the Executive Committee's report from its meeting earlier today and Chairman Butler reported that the Executive Committee decided to keep the five top priority projects and moved the Route 250 Widening project from Rt. 623 to Rt. 621 (Goochland) up as a new sixth top priority. Mr. Butler said that the Route 250 widening project has more money percentage-wise than most other projects on the list and would cost less to accomplish. Chairman Butler noted that the MPO should consider adding the regional mass transit study requested by Governor Baliles to let the state know that there is a need for this study and opened the floor for discussion.

Paul Fisher said staff checked the grant application that was submitted last winter and the request was for \$475,000 for a two-phase consulting study with phase one being the regional public transportation analysis and the second phase being the comprehensive operational analysis that would result in specific plans for system improvements. Mr. Fisher said that VDOT chose not to fund the study through the special transportation grants suggesting that the MPO should use its own funds to do that sort of study. He said the MPO receives annually about a million dollars in federal transportation planning funds that are used for many other activities and there's no surplus to fund this kind of study. Mr. Fisher said the PDC is already overmatching, or subsidizing, the MPO budget through additional local contributions. But, he said that staff would concur that the matter should be brought to VDOT's attention again.

Chris Winstead, Acting VDOT Richmond District Administrator, said the grant funds available under the State Transportation Pilot Grant program were limited and VDOT had to make some hard decisions about where the money would go. He said that though the decision was made not to fund the study with these funds, his recollection was that if the MPO would be willing to put forth a significant commitment from its federal planning money, that the department would do its best to work with complementing these funds to cover such a study. Mr. Winstead indicated there is an open door to cooperation as a team effort with VDOT as part of the solution. Chairman Butler noted that Governor Baliles and the Chamber are also very anxious to see this study done and said that he believes everyone will have to contribute something to get it done. Vickey Badger inquired whether VDRPT's contributing to the effort would help cover the cost of the study and Mr. Winstead replied that would definitely be of help and suggested that working together over the next 30 days they might be able to find ways to fund such an effort. Mr. Winstead concurred with Ms. Draper's comment that having this on the regional priorities list would also be helpful. Chairman Butler noted that in terms of economic development, the companies mentioned by Governor Baliles that left Richmond or chose not to locate in the region would have brought in more taxes than this study could cost. In response to a question on how this study should proceed forward, Dan Lysy stated that staff would come up with a report for review and consideration at the next MPO meeting.

Bill Pantele observed that most of the priority projects are physical improvement capital projects and suggested that rather than adding one more bullet point and putting it at the bottom of the projects list or bumping another project down, that it might be appropriate to show a separate category and simply list the mass transit study as the only item in that category. Discussion ensued as to the best way to emphasize the importance of this study to the CTB. Chris Winstead advised that the preallocation public meeting format is different this year offering elected officials and localities a session from 2:30 to 4:00 to speak informally with the Commissioner of Transportation, CTB board member Gerald McCarthy, and VDRPT and VDOT representatives. Following up on Mr. Pantele's suggestion, Paul Fisher suggested adding a third category "Other Priority Issues" and then listing the transit study under that category.

On motion of Robert Setliff, seconded by Patricia O'Bannon, the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization unanimously approved the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) approves the following updated list of Regional

Priority Transportation 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.

(Regional priority transportation projects are identified and ranked as follows):

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Project</u>
1	RIC Expansion and Access Improvements
2	Main Street Station, High-Speed Intercity Rail, GRTC Improvements
3	Route 360 East of I-295 (Hanover) and Route 360 West (Chesterfield)
4	Parham Road/Patterson Avenue Urban Interchange (Henrico)
5	Huguenot Bridge Reconstruction
6	Route 250 Widening from Rt. 623 to Rt. 621 (Goochland)

Other Regional Priority Projects

- I-64 Corridor and Rail Improvements, Richmond to Hampton Roads
- Route 10 Widening (Chesterfield)
- RMA and Powhite Parkway Extension Toll Removal
- Widening of I-64 between I-295 (at Short Pump) and Route 288 to six lanes
- Virginia Capital Trail project (Richmond to Williamsburg)

Other Priority Issues

- Regional Mass Transit Study

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

A. High-Speed Rail Proposal and Future Technology –

1. High-Speed Rail Development –

Pat O'Bannon reported on her June 2005 trip to Germany as part of a National Association of Counties (NACo) delegation invited by Siemens Corporation to learn about their high-speed trains. Ms. O'Bannon said she spent a lot of time preparing for the trip doing research, asking questions, meeting with county staff and with

representatives of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) and the North Carolina Highway Department's Division of Public Transportation. She also spoke with CSX and Norfolk Southern about available rail right-of-way saying there are several corridors in the U.S. with enough right-of-way to accommodate true high-speed rail. In Germany, Ms. O'Bannon learned about current technology, visited the Siemens plant and the remote tracking facility, rode on the Siemens maglev train and went down under the maglev train tracks (built on piers) to hear the train noise level. Ms. O'Bannon referenced her Op Ed article published in the Monday, August 17 edition of the Richmond Times-Dispatch saying that passenger rail solutions start with a dedicated right-of-way that does not share the high-speed passenger rail track with freight trains. During her report, Ms. O'Bannon and others made the following points:

- Siemens steel-wheel high-speed trains run on a single continuous steel rail laid on a cement strip, which eliminates the “clickety-clack” and is very quiet running at speeds of approximately 145 to 150 miles an hour.
- High-speed rail is intercity, long-distance rail service and is not economical for distances of less than 50 miles.
- Right-of-way is available from Petersburg to Raleigh, some owned by the State of North Carolina, CSX, and others.
- If dedicated right-of-way is given or leased at a very low or nominal rate for a long period of time to Siemens or another private corporation, they will build the system and run it at a profit.
- It is possible to revamp Amtrak by providing a federal funding platform for high-speed rail that would ensure long-term, dedicated right-of-way.
- U.S. maglev technology (as used at Old Dominion University) does not work due to the power source being located in the car instead of the track as it is in the Siemens maglev technology.

2. High-Speed Rail of the Future –

The MPO viewed one section of a DVD provided by Siemens, *Transrapid, Flying on the Ground*, “High-Tech for Flying on the Ground,” which provided an overview of the Siemens high-speed rail maglev technology. Following the DVD presentation, Ms. O'Bannon made several observations. She noted the windmills shown in the

video and said the private company uses these to generate electricity which is put into the grid system and helps offset their costs. She said one of the issues mentioned is the narrow radii the steel-wheeled trains can run on saying they can run up to 150 miles per hour on the same radius that our current high-speed rail trains run on at only 110 miles per hour. Ms. O'Bannon said she inquired of CSX and Norfolk Southern about right-of-way from Richmond to Washington, D.C. becoming available and found that there is no right-of-way available as neither company will give up the right-of-way they currently own. Chairman Butler thanked Ms. O'Bannon for her report.

B. Other Business –

Chairman Butler reminded everyone that the November MPO meeting is cancelled due to an extended Planning District Commission workshop and the next MPO meeting will be held December 8.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Butler adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:55 P.M.