

RICHMOND AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

MINUTES OF MEETING

May 8, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT

REPRESENTING

Daniel A. Gecker, Chairman	County of Chesterfield
William J. Pantele, Vice Chairman	City of Richmond
Daniel N. Lysy, Secretary (Alternate)	RRPDC
Joseph Andrews, Jr.	County of Goochland
Charles Badger (Nonvoting)	VDRPT
Robert M. Berry	RMA
Malvern R. Butler	County of Goochland
Deborah B. Coats (Alternate)	County of Hanover
Timothy W. Cotman	County of Charles City
Tammye Davis (Nonvoting)	FHWA
Marleen K. Durfee	County of Chesterfield
E. Todd Eure	County of Henrico
Thomas E. Flynn	City of Richmond
George M. Homewood	County of New Kent
E. Martin Jewell (Alternate)	City of Richmond
Patricia O'Bannon	County of Henrico
Mark E. Riblett (Alternate)	VDOT
Robert R. Setliff	County of Hanover
Barbara K. Smith (Alternate)	County of Chesterfield
Von Tisdale (Nonvoting)	RideFinders
Stran L. Trout	County of New Kent
Carson Tucker (Alternate)	County of Powhatan
Joseph E. Vidunas	County of Hanover
Joseph B. Walton	County of Powhatan

MEMBERS ABSENT

REPRESENTING

Viktoria W. Badger	City of Richmond
Cliff Burnette (Nonvoting)	VDA
Linda G. Broady-Myers (Nonvoting)	EDAC
Karin Carmack	County of Powhatan
Tony Cho (Nonvoting)	FTA
Ralph J. "Joe" Emerson	County of Henrico
John Gordon	County of Hanover
Thomas A. Hawthorne	VDOT
James M. Holland	County of Chesterfield
John M. Lewis	GRTC Transit System
John McCracken	County of Chesterfield

MEMBERS ABSENT (Cont.)

REPRESENTING

Robert P. Morris (Nonvoting)..... CTAC
Faye O. PrichardTown of Ashland
Charles H. Rasnick (Nonvoting)..... Citizen Appointee
Ellen F. RobertsonCity of Richmond
John Rutledge.....CRAC
Frank Thornton County of Henrico

OTHERS PRESENT

REPRESENTING

Gwen BookerFHWA
William R. Britton (Alternate)..... County of Charles City
Reta Busher VDOT
Kelly Hickok.....EDAC
Walter Johnson, Jr..... VDOT
Liz McAdory..... VDOT
Diane Mitchell VDOT
Jim Ponticello..... VDOT
Janice Richard..... FHWA
Ivan Rucker FHWA
Frank Spielberg..... VHB
Alan Tobias..... HNTB
Jin Lee..... RRPDC
Barbara Nelson..... RRPDC
Archita Rajbhandary RRPDC
Sharon Robeson RRPDC
Sarah Smith..... RRPDC
Lee Yolton RRPDC

CALL TO ORDER

MPO Chairman Daniel A. Gecker called the May 8, 2008 meeting of the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to order at approximately 2:35 p.m. in the large conference room of the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission offices.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES

Chairman Gecker introduced and welcomed new MPO voting member Joseph Andrews, Jr. representing Goochland County, and new MPO nonvoting members Tammye Davis representing FHWA, and Von S. Tisdale representing RideFinders.

I. ADMINISTRATION

A. Certification by MPO Secretary of Meeting Quorum –

Dan Lysy reported that a quorum was present.

B. Additions to MPO Agenda –

No requests were made for additions to the MPO agenda.

C. Minutes of the April 10, 2008 MPO Meeting –

On motion of Malvern R. Butler, seconded by Marlene K. Durfee, the MPO unanimously approved the minutes of the April 10, 2008 meeting as presented.

D. Open Public Comment Period –

There were no requests to address the MPO and Chairman Gecker closed the public comment period.

E. Presentation of Resolution of Appreciation to Outgoing Member –

Chairman Gecker noted that David T. Williams was not present at the meeting to receive the resolution of appreciation approved by the MPO at its April 10 meeting, and Mr. Lysy indicated the resolution would be mailed to Mr. Williams.

F. Approval and Presentation of Resolutions of Appreciation to Outgoing Members –

On motion of George M. Homewood, seconded by Marlene K. Durfee, the MPO unanimously approved the following resolutions:

WHEREAS, Ivan Rucker has served with distinction as the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) representative to the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) from November 2001 to April 2008; and

WHEREAS, Ivan Rucker has been an active member of the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, providing timely assistance and services to the region in carrying out the federal requirements associated with the MPO's planning and programming process;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization does hereby commend and express its sincere thanks and appreciation this eighth day of May 2008 to Ivan Rucker for his outstanding service as the FHWA representative to the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, congratulates Ivan Rucker on his new position as Highway Safety Program Manager for the Virginia Division Office of

FHWA and looks forward to his continued service to the citizens of the Richmond region.

and,

WHEREAS, Jameson T. Auten has served with distinction as the RideFinders, Inc. representative to the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) from November 2005 to April 2007; and

WHEREAS, Jameson T. Auten has been an active member of the MPO's Technical Advisory Committee and Regional Mass Transit Study Advisory Committee, advisor on the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan Advisory Committee, and has assisted the MPO in various other ways such as participating in MPO public review meetings; and

WHEREAS, Jameson T. Auten has distinguished himself as an able and active MPO and MPO committees member while serving as the Executive Director of RideFinders, Inc., the region's ridesharing program;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization does hereby commend and express its sincere gratitude this eighth day of May 2008 to Jameson T. Auten for his outstanding service as the RideFinders, Inc. representative to the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, congratulates Jameson T. Auten on his new position as Director of Specialized Transportation for GRTC Transit System, and looks forward to his continued service to the citizens of the Richmond region.

Chairman Gecker requested that MPO Secretary Dan Lysy make the presentations to the honored outgoing members. Mr. Lysy requested that Ivan Rucker come forward to be recognized and noted that Mr. Rucker has served on the MPO since 2001 and will continue an interest in the MPO as FHWA Highway Safety Programs Manager and Emergency Coordinator. Mr. Lysy presented a framed copy of the resolution to Mr. Rucker and the MPO offered a round of applause. Mr. Rucker said he has enjoyed working with staff and the MPO Board and noted that Tammy Davis will replace him at the table, but he will still attend meetings. Mr. Rucker said he would be glad to provide assistance in the area of safety in his new position with FHWA. He thanked the MPO for their recognition.

Jameson Auten was not able to be present at today's meeting and Mr. Lysy requested that Von Tisdale deliver his framed resolution noting that Mr. Auten and Ms. Tisdale have recently switched jobs.

G. MPO Chairman's Report –

1. MPO Nominating Committee Report –

Bob Setliff, Chairman of the MPO Officers Nominating Committee, reported that the committee would have a report at the next MPO meeting indicating that the committee is waiting for an answer from the Henrico County Board Chairman as to which of the Henrico MPO representatives they would recommend to fill the MPO Vice Chairman's position.

2. Other Business –

Chairman Gecker had no other business to report.

H. RRPDC Transportation Director's Report –

1. Articles on Proposed James River Barge Service –

Mr. Lysy noted the articles included under agenda tab three from the *Hampton Roads Daily Press*, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, and *U.S.A. Today* recognizing the MPO efforts at its April meeting in allocating \$2.3 million in CMAQ funds as a partial start-up effort for a James River barge service from Hampton Roads to Port of Richmond. Mr. Lysy said staff is distributing copies of a letter to Chairman Gecker, jointly signed by FHWA Division Administrator Roberto Fonseca-Martinez and Maritime Administration (MARAD) Acting Associate Administrator Roger Bohnert recognizing the work the Richmond Area MPO has done to get this innovative, unique service started between Richmond and Hampton Roads. He noted FHWA and others are working on additional funding and that hopefully those efforts will help make this project a reality. Mr. Lysy said that the port activity at Hampton Roads is extremely busy and freight activity from the port will increase with the recent opening of a new cargo terminal by APS Terminals, a sister company of Maersk, one of the world's largest private container shipping lines. He said as they grow, the number of trucks on Rt. 460 and I-64 will increase and the marine highway should help divert some of that traffic and bring some economic benefit to the Richmond region.

Mr. Lysy expressed his thanks and appreciation to Barbara Nelson who has worked diligently since the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) annual conference when the MPO was approached by the Maritime Administration regarding the project. He said Ms. Nelson stepped forward, in addition to all her other duties, and took the lead managing, promoting and moving this effort forward. Mr. Lysy said he really appreciates her efforts, noting that

intermodal planning is an area that the MPO has had little staff time to address.

2. Funding for Regional Mass Transit Services –

Mr. Lysy said there are three articles of particular note dealing with regional mass transit services included under agenda tab three, one of which deals with GRTC seeking an \$11 million subsidy from the City of Richmond. The second article, from *Mass Transit* magazine, talks about legislative challenges facing elected officials who are dealing with transit, and was written by Michael Townes, president and CEO of Hampton Roads Transit. Mr. Lysy noted that Mr. Townes is a former RRPDC intern, former GRTC Planning Director, and has been president of the Transportation Research Board. The third article details a visit by Atlanta officials to Charlotte to learn how they went about developing a very successful transit system. Mr. Lysy said Charlotte has a half-cent sales tax for providing light rail and transit service and a voter initiative to remove that tax was overwhelmingly defeated by about 70 percent last fall, indicating the dedication and public interest in transit.

Mr. Lysy said he brings these articles to the MPO's attention because they are relevant to one of the recommendations in the RMTS study, "To establish a secure and dedicated regional source of funding for transit." He said transit is very much shaped by land use and if there isn't a dedicated source of revenue with the commitment in place, it is difficult to lay out plans that will provide for that service. Mr. Lysy noted that GRTC is preparing to embark on the bus rapid transit line between Willow Lawn, downtown and Rocketts Landing. Mr. Lysy said he would be glad to answer any questions.

Ivan Rucker commented that he wants to reemphasize that he is 100 percent sure he speaks for Federal Highway's administrators and he believes he speaks for the MARAD Acting Associate Administrator saying they are 100 percent behind the MPO on the marine highway initiative. Mr. Rucker said if there is any support needed from either MARAD or FHWA, to please call and let them know. Mr. Lysy thanked Mr. Rucker for his offer of assistance and for FHWA support.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Report on Financial Close-Out of Previous Allocations of RSTP and CMAQ Funded Projects –

Chairman Gecker noted that he requested on behalf of the MPO that Reta Busher, VDOT Chief Financial Officer, attend the MPO meeting to talk

about the timing of closing out Richmond Area MPO RTSP and CMAQ completed projects and when those funds will be available for reallocation. Chairman Gecker expressed appreciation to Ms. Busher for being present. Ms. Busher said she is new to VDOT having served as Chief Financial Officer for about nine months, and that she came in trying to complete VDOT's federal strategies and to start and complete the Six-Year Improvement Program. She noted that one of the assignments of the Programming Division, which falls under her supervision, is the reconciliation of VDOT records with MPO records on RSTP and CMAQ funding on closed out projects. Ms. Busher reported she does not have information to bring to the MPO on this matter and she understands how disappointing that is since the initial request was submitted to VDOT over a year ago, and she promised that VDOT will get to a bottom line on this matter. Ms. Busher shared that during her research of the effort put forward on this project to date, she has discovered that VDOT implemented a new financial system and created a new project database, and some of the projects on the MPO's list predate these changes, so VDOT staff is looking at archived information, some automated and some paper. She said they are trying to put together the information provided by the MPO and FHWA in terms of obligation, allocation, and funding as well as information from the VDOT financial system and a couple of other systems that weren't compatible with the VDOT financial system in the mid-nineties.

Ms. Busher said what she can do today is indicate that she will complete the reconciliation and explained that what VDOT is doing is not only important for the Richmond Area MPO, but also for all the MPOs in Virginia in creating a reconciliation process and a communication process that will take care of the past and will facilitate reconciliation on a regular basis going forward. She noted the complexity of the funding process and the variance between allocation, expenditure, and reimbursement numbers for each project. Ms. Busher made a commitment to return with information, but said that she cannot give a date for her return due to intensive staff effort in preparation for the General Assembly special session on transportation funding to begin June 23 and also finalizing the state Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) the week prior to that session. She said when the SYIP is approved, she will return to the MPO with a timeline for completion of the reconciliation. Ms. Busher said that going forward, she would like to have more communication and more visits with this MPO and MPOs throughout the state, and she offered to answer questions. Numerous questions and extensive discussion ensued and the following major points were brought forward.

- The reconciliation will not be completed in time for the MPO to move projects forward under the upcoming Six-Year Improvement Plan under consideration for approval by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) at its June 18 meeting.

- Ms. Busher indicated that the report that has been under review for several months is actually a draft research report documenting, by project, data and information available from FHWA, VDOT financial system records, and Richmond Area MPO records on obligations, allocations, project-to-project transfers, reallocations, redistributions, project changes and other data.
- There are differences in VDOT records and MPO records; Ms. Busher believes there were some flaws in the process and wants to look at information in a different format. She wants to be certain the data justifies and supports that the funds are actually there for reallocation or where they have been spent and from what category.
- Ivan Rucker expressed Federal Highway's (FHWA) concern over the level of involvement from VDOT over the past year in trying to resolve this dilemma and pledged to Ms. Busher any assistance FHWA can provide to resolve the situation. Mr. Rucker recalled the 3-C agreement signed between the state, the MPO and FHWA saying the state has an obligation and responsibility to provide this obligation and authorization data to the MPO promptly.
- Ms. Busher said she hears FHWA and MPO concern and frustration and is disappointed she is unable to provide the information noting that VDOT has made great strides in terms of financial responsibility and record-keeping and noted that some of these project records predate changes in VDOT record-keeping processes. Ms. Busher pledged that after the General Assembly special session on transportation on June 23, that she will put together a team to work on this project to bring it to completion by the end of the [calendar] year.
- Janice Richard, FHWA Financial Manager, described the FHWA process for accounting for monies reimbursed to VDOT on projects noting that when fewer funds are spent on a project than anticipated, she releases the funds to go back into the pot for reallocation or reprogramming. Ms. Richard indicated she only accounts for FHWA money and not for all the other monies received by the state for various projects.
- There was discussion of what would happen in the event that the records cannot be reconciled, and Ms. Busher said it is possible that if they are able to follow each project source by source, year by year of allocation, to final expenditures by source, that we may all agree on most projects. She said that VDOT will need to establish a policy on how any dispute of the final VDOT accounting will be handled not only for this MPO, but for all MPO's in the state.

- This is the first time VDOT has attempted full reconciliation of financial records with MPO records, though VDOT, FHWA, and the MPO are all audited annually. Auditing within a system is not the same as reconciling records from several different systems.
- Janice Richard noted the Financial Integrity Review Program (FIRE) and said that one key that will trigger FHWA to inquire about a project is absence of expenditure activity for a year. If justification is adequate, then the funds will remain on the project; otherwise the project is closed out and the federal dollars are release on those projects.

Chairman Gecker thanked Ms. Busher for her report and for taking time to be present and answer questions saying the MPO looks forward to her report by December.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consent Action Items –

1. FY 08 Unified Work Program (UWP) Budget Amendments –

On motion of Malvern R. Butler, seconded by William J. Pantele, the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization unanimously approved the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) amends the FY 2008 Unified Work Program (UWP) to shift Federal Highway Administration/PL funds and Federal Transit Administration Section 5303 funds among various Richmond Regional Planning District Commission staff UWP work task budgets as presented.

2. Authorization for Staff Travel; TRB Summer Ports, Waterways, Freight, and International Trade Conference –

On motion of Malvern R. Butler, seconded by William J. Pantele, the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization unanimously approved the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) authorizes staff from the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission to attend the 33rd Annual TRB Summer Ports, Waterways, Freight, and International Trade Conference in Baltimore, Maryland.

B. MPO Regional Mass Transit Study (RMTS) –

Lee Yolton noted information included in tab six of the agenda package and also the Executive Summary of the report that was enclosed with the agenda package. Mr. Yolton introduced Alan Tobias with the lead study consultant, HNTB, and Frank Spielberg with VHB, a study sub-consultant. Mr. Yolton reported that the Study Advisory Committee (SAC) has met periodically providing input and guidance for the consultants and noted that Todd Eure has served as chairman for the SAC and Larry Hagin as vice chairman. Mr. Yolton reported that the RMTS Advisory Committee recommended at its last meeting that the MPO accept the study as work completed. He noted that at several key points in the study process, the study consultant provided updates to the MPO, that they held two public meetings, and that they met with the MPO Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) and the MPO Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee (EDAC) as well as the MPO Technical Advisory Committee. Mr. Yolton reviewed the mission of the RMTS saying it is intended to be the plan of action for the Richmond region to implement the regional transit system to serve the needs of this area. He said the study has addressed questions such as where are people most likely to use transit; what type of transit, by mode, is most feasible; what would be the cost of providing the service; who would be served by transit; timing of adding services; how will the regional mass transit system be managed; how can people be encouraged to use mass transit; and how can we pay for a regional mass transit system. Mr. Yolton said the RMTS provides answers to each of these questions and he briefly reviewed the recommendations of the study saying he believes the study has fulfilled the mission set out for it.

Mr. Yolton turned the meeting over to HNTB lead consultant Alan Tobias to provide more details of the study. Mr. Tobias noted the Executive Summary of the Report saying it provides the highlights of the 17-month study and the resulting 300-page full report document. Mr. Tobias proceeded with his presentation using the following PowerPoint slides (a handout of which was distributed during Mr. Yolton's opening remarks):

- Richmond Regional Mass Transit Study (cover slide)
- Study Schedule
- Corridors and Modes Analyzed
- Corridors
- Proposed Corridors (map)
- Local Service Extensions
- Local Route Service Areas (map)
- Priority Categories
- Recommended Tier 1 Service
- Recommended Tier II Service

- Recommended Tier III Service
- Institutional Recommendations

Mr. Tobias completed his presentation and said it has been a real pleasure to work with the RRPDC staff and with the RMTS Advisory Committee, a very dedicated group of people who put a lot of hard work into making the study a reality. Mr. Tobias offered to answer questions.

[Chairman Gecker left during Mr. Tobias' presentation due to another engagement and MPO Vice Chairman Bill Pantele, acting as chairman, presided at the remainder of the meeting.]

Acting Chairman Bill Pantele called for questions and there were none.

On motion of Malvern R. Butler, seconded by Patricia S. O'Bannon, the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization unanimously approved the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) accepts the MPO Regional Mass Transit Study (RMTS).

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was brought forward for consideration.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Acting Chairman Bill Pantele adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:40 p.m.