



**Harrisonburg
Rockingham**
Metropolitan Planning
Organization

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HRMPO Policy Board Meeting Agenda

August 17, 2023, 3:00 PM

Rockingham County Administration Center
20 East Gay Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22802

To Join Meeting Via Zoom:

Meeting ID: 893 6558 1669 **** **Passcode:** 883121 **** **Dial In:** 301-715-8592

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes of the July 20 2023, Policy Board Meeting*
3. Public Comment
4. Presentation: Overview and Update on The Port of Virginia
 - *Chris Gullickson, Director, Economic Development, Virginia Port Authority*
5. Approval of Draft FY24 Unified Planning Work Program Amendment (BAF #23-14)*
6. Approval of the Draft FY 21-24 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment (BAF #23-15)*
7. Approval of the SMART SCALE Policy Changes Response Letter (BAF #23-16)*
8. Agency Updates
 - a. VDOT
 - b. DRPT
 - c. HDPT
 - d. Localities
9. Other Business
10. Upcoming Meetings
 - a. HRMPO TAC Meeting, Thursday, September 7, 2023, 2:00 p.m.
 - b. HRMPO Policy Board Meeting, Thursday, September 21, 2023, 3:00 p.m.
11. Adjournment

* Action needed



HRMPO Policy Board Minutes July 20, 2023, 3:00 p.m.

Rockingham County Administration Center
20 East Gay Street, Harrisonburg, VA 22802

Voting Members	Non-Voting Members	Staff
City of Harrisonburg	Kevin Jones, FHWA	✓ Bonnie Riedesel, CSPDC*
Deanna Reed	Michelle DeAngelis, FTA	✓ Ann Cundy, CSPDC
Laura Dent, Chair	Rusty Harrington, Aviation	✓ Ansley Heller, CSPDC
Dany Fleming	✓ Grace Stankus, DRPT*	✓ Rita Whitfield, CSPDC
✓ Gerald Gatobu	Bill Yates, JMU	
Ande Banks	✓ Valerie Kramer, JMU*	Others
Rockingham County	Alternates	✓ Tom Hartman, Harrisonburg
✓ Casey Armstrong	Rhonda Cooper, Rockingham	✓ Kim Sandum, Shenandoah Alliance
✓ Rick Chandler, Vice Chair	Rachel Salatin, Rockingham	✓ Shane McCabe, VDOT*
✓ Stephen King	Cheryl Spain, Harrisonburg	✓ Jeremy Mason, VDOT
Town of Mt. Crawford	Ande Banks, Harrisonburg	
✓ Neal Dillard	✓ Alex Wilmer, Bridgewater	
Town of Dayton	Robert Taylor, Mt. Crawford	
Earl Mathers	Libby Clark, Mt. Crawford	
Town of Bridgewater	Christa Hall, Dayton	
Jay Litten	✓ Brad Reed, VDOT	
VDOT	✓ Don Komara, VDOT	
Todd Stevens	Matt Dana, VDOT	
	Jeff Lineberry, VDOT	
*Zoom Participants		

Call to Order

The July 20, 2023, meeting of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (HRMPO) Policy Board was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chairperson Rick Chandler. Pursuant to §2.2-3708.2 of the Code of Virginia, HRMPO Policy Board members may participate in meetings of the HRMPO or its committees through electronic communication means. Those who attended virtually are indicated by an asterisk; all others attended in-person.

Approval of Minutes

Chairperson Chandler presented the minutes from the May 18, 2023, HRMPO Policy Board meeting. Mr. Komara moved, seconded by Mr. King, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Chairperson Chandler opened the floor to the public for comments. There were no comments from the public.

Election of Officers (Board Memo #23-6)

Chairperson Chandler presented for consideration Election of Officers. He stated that the Nominating Committee, appointed by the Chairperson at their May 18, 2023, meeting, consisted of Stephen King, Ande Banks, and Don Komara. Upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee, Mr. King moved, seconded by Mr. Komara, to elect Laura Dent as Chairperson, and Rick Chandler as Vice Chairperson. Motion was carried by unanimous vote.

FY24 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment (BAF #23-12)

Vice Chairperson Chandler presented for consideration the FY24 UPWP Amendment. Ms. Cundy reviewed the Amendment, noting that the Amendment moves \$7,920 from the FHWA PL contingency and \$3,394 from the FTA 5303 Long Range Planning work element into the Administrative work element to cover the \$11,314 cost of migrating the HRMPO website to the Wordpress platform. She noted that the Drupal-based HRMPO website could no longer be hosted by the current contractor and Avid Core has been requested to rebuild the HRMPO website in Wordpress. Ms. Cundy noted that completion of the migration and the launch of the website is anticipated by October 2023. Mr. Dillard moved, seconded by Mr. Armstrong, to release the FY24 UPWP Amendment for 21 days of public comment. Motion carried unanimously.

FY21-24 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment (BAF #23-13)

Vice Chairperson Chandler presented for consideration the FY21-24 TIP Amendment. Ms. Cundy stated that at the request of the VDOT Federal Programs Division, HRMPO staff have prepared an amendment and three administrative modifications to the FY21-24 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in order to complete the closeout of the FY21-24 TIP and STIP. She noted that the TIP Amendment adds \$6,500,000 to the Preventive Maintenance and System Preservation Grouping, and changes to the maintenance groupings in the TIP do not yet reflect funding for specific projects. The modifications reflect changes in funding in three maintenance groupings: 1) Maintenance: Traffic and Safety Operations — move \$2,069,444 in FFY23 to Preventive Maintenance and System Preservation; 2) Maintenance: Preventive Maintenance for Bridges — move \$6,648,943 to Preventive Maintenance and System Preservation; and 3) Maintenance: Preventive Maintenance and System Preservation—



shifts funds between years within the grouping. Mr. King moved, seconded by Mr. Dillard, to release the FY21-24 TIP Amendment as presented for a 21-day public comment period. Motion was carried by unanimous vote.

Presentation: Overview of Proposed SMART SCALE Policy Changes

Mr. Reed gave a PowerPoint presentation on SMART SCALE Policy Changes, noting that there is a process review for SMART SCALE underway for potential policy changes to the SMART SCALE scoring system, led by the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI). He reported on the SMART SCALE Program Stakeholder Survey and findings conducted by OIPI to collect information about the SMART SCALE program. Mr. Reed noted that the data collected will be used to provide feedback to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) as it considers policy changes to the SMART SCALE process for utilization in future SMART SCALE rounds. He reviewed the potential issues identified, the SMART SCALE prioritization process, and potential process changes. Mr. Reed reviewed the next steps and schedule, noting that policy adoption by the CTB is scheduled for December 2023. After the presentation, discussion ensued regarding the proposed SMART SCALE changes, and the impact on the HRMPO region. After discussion, it was the consensus of the members present for HRMPO staff to draft a letter to the CTB addressing the potential negative impacts to the HRMPO region as a result of the proposed changes, and localities are encouraged to communicate with the CTB on the matter as well.

Agency Updates

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

Mr. Reed announced that the SMART Portal will be accepting applications from localities starting August 1st until October 31st for the Virginia Highway Safety Improvement Program (VHSIP) Systemic applications. He reported on Revenue Sharing and Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA) applications, noting that the applications are due October 2, 2023.

Mr. Komara reported on the following:

- Reported on the status of the Route 720 Smithland Road and Route 33 bridge projects;
- Reported on the Route 259 bridge replacement project in the Town of Broadway;
- Announced a presentation regarding sound walls will be made to the Harrisonburg City Council on September 12, 2023; and



- Reported on the Interstate 81 Staunton-area widening project between mile marker 221 and 225 in Augusta County near the City of Staunton.

City of Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation (HDPT)

Mr. Gatobu reported on the Transit Strategic Plan, noting that the kick-off meeting was well attended. He reported the Microtransit Study, a City-operated on-demand ridesharing service, has been completed. Mr. Gatobu reported that the City is seeking to hire full-time transit and school bus drivers for the fall season.

Localities

City of Harrisonburg Department of Public Works

Mr. Hartman announced that the U.S. Department of Transportation awarded the City of Harrisonburg a \$14,368,180 RAISE Grant to convert one driving lane of U.S.-11 (Liberty Street and Noll Drive) to a two-way separated bicycle facility between the intersections of Main Street and Noll Drive, and Grattan Street and Liberty Street. He gave a status update on roadway reconfigurations; the Mt. Clinton Pike shared-use path project; and the use of speed enforcement cameras in the City of Harrisonburg.

Upcoming Meetings

Chairperson Chandler announced the following upcoming meetings: HRMPO TAC meeting will be held on August 3, 2023, at 2:00 p.m., and the HRMPO Policy Board meeting will be held on August 17, 2023, at 3:00 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the HRMPO Policy Board, a motion for adjournment was unanimously passed at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann W. Cundy".

Ann Cundy
Director of Transportation



TO: Harrisonburg-Rockingham MPO Policy Board
FROM: Ann Cundy, Director of Transportation
MEETING DATE: August 17, 2023
RE: **Policy Board Action Form #23-14 – FY24 Unified
Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment**

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend that the Policy Board approve the amended FY24 UPWP.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Policy Board released the draft FY24 UPWP Amendment for 21 days of public comment at their July 20, 2023, meeting. Staff has not received any public or agency comments during the comment period to date.

This FY24 UPWP Amendment moves \$7,920 from the FHWA PL contingency and \$3,394 from the FTA 5303 Long Range Planning work element into the Administrative work element to cover the \$11,314 cost of migrating the HRMPO website to the WordPress platform.

[Draft FY24 UPWP Amendment](#)



TO: Harrisonburg-Rockingham MPO Policy Board

FROM: Ansley Heller, Transportation Planner

MEETING DATE: August 17, 2023

RE: **Policy Board Action Form #23-15 – FY21-24 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment**

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Policy Board approve the FY21-24 TIP Amendment.

TIP AMENDMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATIONS

The Policy Board approved release of a draft FY21-24 TIP Amendment at the July 20, 2023 meeting for a 21-day public comment period. Staff did not receive any comments during that period.

The TIP Amendment adds \$6,500,000 to the Preventive Maintenance and System Preservation Grouping in the Highway section of the TIP.

MPO staff has also made the following administrative modifications to the Highway TIP:

- Maintenance: Traffic and Safety Operations — move \$2,069,444 in FFY23 to Preventive Maintenance and System Preservation
- Maintenance: Preventive Maintenance for Bridges — move \$6,648,943 to Preventive Maintenance and System Preservation
- Maintenance: Preventive Maintenance and System Preservation—shifts funds between years within the grouping.

ATTACHMENTS

[Draft FY21-24 TIP Amendments and Administrative Modifications](#)



TO: Harrisonburg-Rockingham MPO Policy Board

FROM: Ann Cundy, Director of Transportation

MEETING DATE: August 17, 2023

RE: **Policy Board Action Form #23-16 – Draft Letter to the Secretary of Transportation Regarding SMART SCALE Policy Changes**

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend that the Policy Board approve the to the Secretary of Transportation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) is considering changes to the SMART SCALE project scoring process that will affect project eligibility and competitiveness for the HRWMPO region. VDOT and MPO staff summarized the proposed SMART SCALE policy changes to the Policy Board at the July 20, 2023 meeting. The Board directed staff to draft a letter to the Secretary of Transportation and the Commonwealth Transportation Board outlining the MPO's concerns.

PROPOSED SMART SCALE POLICY CHANGES

The CTB conducted a SMART SCALE retreat on July 19, 2023 to evaluate the program scoring process, and is proposing the following key program changes:

- *Reducing the application cap.* The change would reduce Tier 1 entities such as the HRMPO and CSPDC from four to two applications.
- *Restricting eligible project types for High Priority Program (HPP) and Eliminating Step 2.* The CTB is proposing to restrict the types of projects eligible for HPP to promote projects larger in scope and impact based on concerns that the HPP is implementing mostly smaller projects (less than \$10 million). Eliminating Step 2 in the HPP selection process would make District Grant Projects that would have been funded under DGP ineligible for HPP funding.
- *Adjusting the Land Use scoring factor.* The land use factor would be adjusted from a stand-alone metric to a multiplier for other project benefits. The CTB is concerned that the land use score is disproportionately impacting overall project scoring and selection. Subsequently, the other SMART SCALE scoring factor weights would need to be adjusted to account for the elimination of land use as a standalone factor.

ATTACHMENTS

[Draft Letter to the Secretary of Transportation](#)



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August 10, 2023

The Honorable W. Sheppard Miller, III
Secretary of Transportation
Office of the Secretary of Transportation
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor
1111 East Broad Street
P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Secretary Miller and Members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board:

As the Policy Board of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (HRMPO), we have closely followed the CTB's review of SMART SCALE and proposed policy changes. We are concerned about how the proposed changes will affect our region, its localities, and rural Virginia more broadly.

Our MPO works closely with our localities and VDOT District staff to select projects from the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan that are important to our region. Not all of these projects involve new roadway construction, widening, or rebuilding interstate interchanges. Rather, our region's priorities are multimodal and varied. For example, we submitted both the I-81 Exit 247 improvements project in FY20 (\$47 million), as well as the North Main Street Sidewalk and Bike Lane Project in FY24 (\$5.8 million) for High Priority Project (HPP) funding. The latter project closes gaps in a regional sidewalk network previously supported by a Rockingham County SMART SCALE project from FY20. Both projects are regional priorities in HRMPO's Long Range Transportation Plan.

We strongly encourage the CTB **not** to restrict the list of eligible project types for the HPP program. MPOs, Planning District Commissions and VDOT Construction Districts know their regions' needs, and should not be limited to a short list of project types that represent a narrow definition of transportation needs centered on congestion mitigation. The Congestion Mitigation Goal Area for our Type C and D communities is only 15% of our weighted benefit score in SMART SCALE. If the HRMPO region were to submit a HPP application that fits this proposed short set of project types, it would score very poorly compared to projects in area Types A and B where congestion mitigation is weighted more heavily (45% and 35% respectively). Safety is our region's top priority and one of our most heavily-weighted Goal Areas. The HPP program must allow for safety projects like Corridor Treatments, Regional Trails, and Park and Ride Lots to meet the needs of the Commonwealth, not just the Urban Crescent.

We wish to counter the narrative that SMART SCALE applicants submit smaller (<\$10 million) projects because they are more likely to be funded. We submit projects large and small based on local and regional priorities, and our plans and studies focus on cost-effective solutions

to regional challenges. If the HRMPO submits a bike and pedestrian project to SMART SCALE, it is because the project has the community and elected leaders' support, and because the Transportation Alternatives Program is not sufficiently funded to support multi-million-dollar funding requests. In 2023, it costs \$2 million to build one mile of sidewalk, while the TAP program allocates \$2 million to an entire Construction District to fund projects over a two-year period. SMART SCALE must remain a multi-modal transportation funding program, and other funding programs must keep pace with the cost of building transportation infrastructure.

We support the Land Use Goal Area due to its success in documenting the benefits coordinating transportation investments with land use across Virginia. The intent of Land Use - incentivizing multi-modal projects that benefit *all* Virginians - is correct. If the Land Use Goal Area score is to be converted to a multiplier and the Goal Area weights assigned to the other Goal Areas, we request that for Type C and D regions, the additional ten percentage points to Safety rather than splitting them between Safety and Congestion Mitigation.

The proposal to reduce the number of applications for our Tier 1 region from four to two will place an undue burden on rural localities, and particularly Rockingham County, which has four towns that do not maintain their own roads and rely on the County to submit SMART SCALE applications on their behalf. Limiting the County to two applications effectively renders these towns ineligible for funding through SMART SCALE when the County regularly submits more than two applications for their own projects in each round.

Reducing the number of applications for rural communities combined with the proposed shortened list of eligible project types under the HPP program, plus a smaller number of eligible roadways (non-MPO counties do not have Regional Networks) *plus* the lack of regional transportation funding authorities in rural areas to leverage funds puts rural Virginia at a significant disadvantage in SMART SCALE. We simply will not be able to compete against more urban regions with more applications, more projects that align with an urban-focused set of project types, and more leveraged funding.

We understand that time is of the essence in sharing this information with the CTB, the Secretary of Transportation and his staff. Thank you for considering our concerns, and for sharing them with the larger group. We and our staff are available to meet about this matter should you wish.

Sincerely,

Laura Dent, Chair
Harrisonburg-Rockingham MPO