

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board Minutes January 16, 2025, 3:00 p.m.

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

	Voting Member		Alternates		Staff
	City of Harrisonburg	✓	Dylan Nicely, Rockingham	✓*	Ann Cundy
✓	Laura Dent, Chair		Rachel Salatin, Rockingham	✓	Paula Melester
	Dany Fleming		Cheryl Spain, Harrisonburg	✓	Garreth Bartholomew
✓	Gerald Gatobu		Meggie Roche, Dayton	✓	Zach Beard
	Deanna Reed	✓	Alex Wilmer, Bridgewater		
	Ande Banks		Robert Taylor, Mt. Crawford		Others
	Rockingham County	✓	Libby Clark, Mt. Crawford	✓*	Kim Sandum, Shen. Alliance
	Leila Longcor		Jeff Lineberry, VDOT	✓*	Kyle Lawrence, SVBC
	Stephen King	✓	Adam Campbell, VDOT	✓*	Shane McCabe, VDOT
✓	Casey Armstrong	✓	Don Komara, VDOT		
	Town of Bridgewater		Matt Dana, VDOT		
	Jay Litten		Non-Voting Members		
	Town of Dayton		Kevin Jones, FHWA		
✓	Brian Borne		Chelsea Beytas, FTA		
	Town of Mt. Crawford	✓*	Rusty Harrington, Aviation		
	Neal Dillard, Vice Chair	✓*	Grace Stankus, DRPT		
	VDOT		Bill Yates, JMU		
✓	Todd Stevens	✓	Valerie Kramer, JMU		

*Indicates virtual attendance

Call to Order

The January 16, 2025 Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (HRMPO) Policy Board meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chairperson Laura Dent. Pursuant to §2.2-3708.2 of the Code of Virginia, HRMPO Board members and attendees may participate in HRMPO meetings through electronic communication. Those who attended virtually are indicated by an asterisk; all others attended in-person.

Minutes

Chairperson Dent presented the minutes from the November 21, 2024 Policy Board meeting.

Ms. Libby Clark moved to approve the minutes; seconded by Mr. Brian Borne. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Chairperson Dent opened the floor for public comment. There were no public comments.

2025 Safety Targets (Board Action Form #25-01)

Mr. Zach Beard presented the HRMPO 2025 safety performance targets. He explained that Federal Highway Administration requires VDOT and MPOs throughout the state to set annual safety performance targets for reducing fatal and severe injury crashes for motorized and non-motorized transportation. The HRMPO must either concur with VDOT's statewide and HRMPO-specific recommended safety targets or set their own MPO-specific safety targets by February 28, 2025. This has been a requirement since 2016, and the HRMPO has concurred with VDOT's recommended safety targets each year.

Mr. Beard explained that OIPI's methodology for establishing targets is derived from models that project future safety performance based on expected crash reductions from completed projects and 5-year trends for annual fatalities, serious injuries, and non-motorized fatalities/serious injuries. The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) approves safety targets annually based on a 5-year average.

Despite statewide fatal crashes declining from approximately 1,000 in 2022 to near 900 in 2023, the overall 5-year average shows an increase of 8.3% in fatal crashes. Severe injury crashes have remained relatively stable over this period. The year 2014 appeared to be an inflection point where both trends either stabilized or increased.

For the HRMPO specifically, Mr. Beard noted that while motorized fatalities and serious injuries have been increasing since 2021, bike/pedestrian-related fatal and severe injury crashes are not increasing, with only 2 fatal bike/pedestrian crashes recorded in 2023. For 2025, the proposed HRMPO targets are 7 fatalities, 51 serious injuries, and 6 non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries.

Mr. Dylan Nicely moved to approve the 2025 safety targets; seconded by Mr. Casey Armstrong. The motion carried unanimously.

FY25 5310 Application (Board Memo #25-01)

Ms. Paula Melester reported that two applicants are seeking FTA Section 5310 funding this year: Pleasant View and The Arc of Harrisonburg-Rockingham. Pleasant View is requesting funding for a replacement minivan with ramp and a raised roof van with lift to transport individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. There is no match or financial contribution required by the MPO. If the applications are awarded funding, the projects will be amended into the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in the spring.

Port Republic/Peach Grove/Neff Avenue Study Update (Board Memo #25-02)

Mr. Garreth Bartholomew provided an update on the Port Republic Road/Peach Grove/Neff Avenue small area study that began in October. He presented findings from the existing conditions analysis, including:

- Traffic counts showing approximately 27,000 vehicles per day north of Peach Grove/Neff and 14,000 vehicles per day south of the intersection.
- Speed studies showing average speeds of 33-39 mph in the 25 mph zone on Peach Grove Avenue.
- Analysis of 148 total crashes between 2019-2023, with 56% involving young drivers under 21.
- Multimodal counts showing 17 on-road bicyclists and 62 crossing pedestrians during the 12-hour count period.

The next study group meeting will be held in February, followed by a public meeting on March 6, 2025 from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. at Stone Spring Elementary School.

Agency Updates

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

Mr. Adam Campbell provided the following SMART SCALE Round 6 updates:

- Significant changes to scoring and policy in Round 6 resulted in fewer projects being recommended for funding - only 53 projects statewide compared to 134 in Round 3
- Total available funding was lower than anticipated, with an almost a 40% reduction in funding between Round 5 and 6 statewide
- All six funded projects in the Staunton District are within MPO areas. The projects in the HRMPO are:
 - Mount Clinton Pike Corridor Project at \$12.3 million
 - Port Republic Road improvements at Exit 245 including turn improvements at Forest Hill Road and shared use path at \$10.5 million

Mr. Don Komara provided the following updates:

- East Market Street Bridge work continues with concrete work progressing despite winter conditions.
- Route 11 project past the fairgrounds continues with right-of-way negotiations for 8 of 26 properties still pending.
- Weyers Cave truck climbing lanes project had a pre-construction conference with the contractor, and the \$61million project has a completion date of December 2027.
- Buc-ee's development work continues with improvements to I-81 ramps; projected opening date of June 30, 2025.
- I-81 widening project advertisement planned for late fall 2025.

After VDOT updates, Mr. Todd Stevens answered a Board question regarding driver behavior and enforcement, particularly related to truck restrictions on I-81. Board members noted that the effectiveness of posted restrictions, whether for truck lanes or speed limits, depends heavily on enforcement. Mr. Stevens noted that current challenges with law enforcement staffing shortages statewide may be contributing to compliance issues.



DPRT

Ms. Grace Stankus provided the following update:

- Grant applications are due February 1, 2025 for all rail and transit applications, except 5303 applications which are due May 1, 2025.

City of Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation (HDPT)

Mr. Gerald Gatobu provided the following updates:

- HDPT is preparing for spring semester operations, working on DRPT grant applications due February 1, and continuing to address ongoing driver shortage challenges.

Upcoming Meetings

Chairperson Dent noted that the next TAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 6, 2025 at 2:00 p.m., and that the next Policy Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 20 at 3:00 p.m. Both meetings will be conducted virtually.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paula Melester".

Paula Melester, Director of Transportation
