

## Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Minutes February 6, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

Meeting conducted virtually via Zoom

	City of Harrisonburg		VDOT		Staff
✓*	Tom Hartman, Chair	✓*	Adam Campbell	✓*	Paula Melester
✓*	Kyle Lawrence	✓*	Don Komara		Garreth Bartholomew
✓*	Thanh Dang	✓*	Jeremy Mason	✓*	Zach Beard
✓*	Gerald Gatobu		Shane McCabe		<b>Others</b>
✓*	Jakob zumFelde		<b>DPRT</b>	✓*	Kim Sandum, Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley
	<b>Rockingham County</b>	✓*	Grace Stankus		
	Rachel Salatin		<b>Non-Voting Members</b>		
✓*	Dylan Nicely, Vice Chair		Kevin Jones, FHWA		
	<b>Town of Bridgewater</b>		Chelsea Beytas, FTA		
✓*	Alex Wilmer		Bill Yates, JMU		
	<b>Town of Dayton</b>		Rusty Harrington, Aviation		
✓*	Brian Borne	✓*	Valerie Kramer, JMU		
	<b>Town of Mt. Crawford</b>				
	Libby Clark				

\*Indicates virtual attendance

### Call to Order

The February 6, 2025, meeting of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (HRMPO) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Chairperson Tom Hartman. Pursuant to §2.2-3708.2 of the Code of Virginia, the HRMPO is allowed to hold up to two virtually meetings annually. This was the first virtual meeting of 2025.

### Public Comment

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

### Minutes

Chairperson Tom Hartman presented the minutes from the December 5, 2024, TAC meeting.

*Mr. Dylan Nicely motioned to approve the minutes; seconded by Thanh Dang. Motion carried unanimously.*

### HRMPO Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary Adjustments (TAC Action Form #25-01)

Mr. Zach Beard presented the proposed HRMPO Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) boundary adjustments based on the 2020 Census urban area delineations. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requires MPOs to incorporate new census-designated urban areas that affect MPO boundaries and planning areas.

VDOT reviewed the HRMPO planning boundaries to account for the new urban area changes and any projected growth that may occur over the next 20 years.

The proposed boundary adjustments are minimal, expanding the current MPO boundary by approximately 28 acres (0.0436 square miles). The adjustments include riverbanks along the North River in Bridgewater, a portion of Pleasant Run to the southwest of the intersection of Creekside Drive and Route 257, and a portion of Old Turnpike Road at the intersection of the railroad and US-33. Mr. Beard explained that pending TAC recommendation for approval, the boundary modifications would be presented to the Policy Board and then submitted to VDOT to forward to FHWA. He noted that all MPO boundary adjustments require approval by the Governor of Virginia.

*Mr. Don Komara motioned to approve the boundary adjustments; seconded by Thanh Dang. Motion carried unanimously.*

#### **FY26 Unified Planning Work Program Development Overview (TAC Memo #25-01)**

Ms. Paula Melester presented an overview of the FY26 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) development process. Ms. Melester explained that the UPWP serves as the MPO's annual work plan and budget, detailing upcoming fiscal year administrative and planning activities along with federal, state, and local budget funding. Ms. Melester reviewed the current funding structure, noting that the federal highway planning funding is fixed and accurate, while the planning carryover from highways comes from FY24. Ms. Melester indicated that the 5303 funds from DRPT are still tentative as they haven't received official confirmation yet.

Ms. Melester highlighted that carryover amounts are decreasing year to year, with the FY25 carryover being approximately \$82,000 from FY23, which has been reduced by about \$20,000 for this year. The 5303 carryover is also lower than anticipated at \$16,606. Using a conservative estimate, they hope to carry over about \$35,000 from this year to FY26. Ms. Melester mentioned that small area studies are becoming more expensive, and the MPO will need to work collaboratively to balance priorities without depleting reserves. The federal highway funding is fixed through FY27, making it important to maintain a conservative contingency going into FY28.

Ms. Melester noted that since Harrisonburg is currently conducting a small area study this year, the rotation would typically move to another locality for the next fiscal year's study. Staff will work with localities over the next month to determine priorities for FY26.

#### **Presentation: RideShare Strategic Plan**

Ms. Danielle Gannon, Transit Planner with CSPDC, presented the recently completed RideShare Strategic Plan. She began with an overview of the program, explaining that it is a DRPT-funded initiative (80% state funds with a 20% local match) operated in collaboration with the Thomas Jefferson PDC.

Ms. Gannon explained that RideShare began in the Thomas Jefferson region in the 1980s, with an attempt to start the program in the Harrisonburg-Rockingham region in the 1990s that was discontinued due to limited interest. Following the 2008 recession, renewed interest led to a partnership with TJPDC to co-sponsor the program, which now spans both regions.

The program provides commuter resources including an app-based ride matching platform for carpools and vanpools, a reward system for logging alternative transportation trips, and a Guaranteed Ride Home program that provides free rides in emergency situations for commuters who use alternative transportation.

Ms. Gannon reported that the strategic plan is required by DRPT for all Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) grant recipients and replaces the previously used Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan. The new strategic plan emphasizes data-driven strategies and outlines goals, objectives, and performance measures for the next five years.

## **Agency Updates**

### ***Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)***

Mr. Don Komara reported:

- VDOT crews responded to widespread weather damage from the previous night's heavy rain and wind (approximately 1.75 inches of rainfall) which meant Route 33 West was temporarily closed due to fallen trees but had reopened before the meeting
- Construction updates:
  - Route 33 project: Concrete pours scheduled for the following day with anticipated opening on Saturday
  - I-81 Weyers Cave project: Surveying underway with shoulder strengthening work planned for March-April
  - Crossover improvements and acceleration/deceleration lanes scheduled for June
  - Much of the work will be conducted during daytime hours to improve efficiency
  - Expected traffic increases on Route 11 through Mount Sydney, Mount Crawford, and Harrisonburg
  - I-81 Harrisonburg segment: Expected advertisement in late fall
  - Route 11 project (past fairgrounds): Summer advertisement, noting challenges of concurrent projects

Mr. Adam Campbell provided updates on:

- SMART SCALE Round 6 results:
  - Approximately \$1.1 billion available statewide (less funding than Round 5)
  - Staunton district: \$39 million in district grants (\$6 million reserved for previous project overages)
  - Only 53 projects recommended for funding statewide (compared to 130 in Round 3)
  - Staunton district secured three district grant projects plus \$44.6 million in high priority funding for three additional projects
  - Local projects recommended for funding:
    - Harrisonburg's Mount Clinton Pike Corridor Safety Project: \$12.3 million
    - HRMPO's Port Republic Road/Forest Hill Road/Exit 245 improvements: \$10.5 million
  - \$8.1 million in unassigned district grant funds remain

- SMART SCALE Round 6 user survey open until February 14 for Round 7 policy feedback
- Vine Street STARS Study:
  - Existing conditions/safety analysis stakeholder meeting held previous week
  - Public survey closed with input from nearly 800 users with results to be shared the following week
- Revenue Sharing and Transportation Alternatives funding:
  - Pre-applications open April 1-May 30 through Smart Portal with pre-application webinars scheduled for interested localities
  - Mr. Komara emphasized the value of Revenue Sharing program for smaller localities given the program matches locality contributions 50/50 and encouraged Mount Crawford, Dayton, and Bridgewater to consider applying

### ***Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)***

Ms. Grace Stankus reported that DRPT has begun reviewing and scoring FY26 application is working on the Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP).

### ***City of Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation (HDPT)***

Mr. Gerald Gatobu reported that HDPT is currently focused on budget development for the upcoming fiscal year and has submitted their grant applications to DRPT. In addition to financial planning, he mentioned that the department is managing impacts from recent weather events and coordinating school transportation services.

### ***Localities***

#### ***Town of Dayton***

Mr. Brian Borne reported no updates.

#### ***Town of Bridgewater***

Mr. Alex Wilmer reported no updates for Bridgewater.

#### ***Rockingham County***

Mr. Dylan Nicely reported no updates from the county but took the opportunity to thank Don Komara and the VDOT team for their rapid and effective response to the tree and ice issues from the previous night's weather event.

#### ***City of Harrisonburg***

Mr. Tom Hartman provided the following updates

- The City is in the final stages of preparing to release the University Boulevard project for bid.
- The Erickson Avenue corridor study – which examines the area between Main Street, Route 42, Mosby Road, and Pleasant Hill Road – is progressing, and the first study group meeting reviewing the existing conditions is complete; the next study group meeting will focus on land use

### **Other Business**

Mr. Zach Beard reminded everyone that the HRMPO small area study at Port Republic, Peach Grove, and Neff Avenue will have its next study team meeting on Friday, February 21 at 10 a.m., where the study concepts will be presented for the first time. A public meeting is scheduled for March 6 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at Stone Spring Elementary for public comment on these concepts.

Mr. Don Komara and Mr. Tom Hartman briefly discussed the public meeting held the previous night regarding sidewalks on North Main Street. Mr. Jakob zumFelde reported good attendance despite the weather, with property owners present and everyone supportive of the project given that people are already walking and biking through the area. Mr. Hartman noted significant increases in pedestrian activity with the opening of the navigation center, with Mr. Komara adding that development at the intersection of Mount Clinton Pike and Route 11 will further increase pedestrian traffic.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

Chairperson Hartman announced that the next Policy Board meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. and will be conducted virtually. The next TAC meeting will be held in-person on March 6, 2025, at the Rockingham County offices.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Zach Beard, Program Manager