

## Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board Minutes May 22, 2025, 3:00 p.m.

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

	<b>Voting Members</b>		<b>Alternates</b>		<b>Staff</b>
	<b>City of Harrisonburg</b>	✓	Dylan Nicely, Rockingham	✓*	Ann Cundy
	Laura Dent, Chair		Rachel Salatin, Rockingham	✓	Paula Melester
✓	Dany Fleming	✓	Cheryl Spain, Harrisonburg	✓	Garreth Bartholomew
✓	Gerald Gatobu	✓	Tom Hartman, Harrisonburg	✓	Zach Beard
✓*	Nasser Alsaadun	✓	Alex Wilmer, Bridgewater	✓	Kayla Dixon
	Ande Banks		Robert Taylor, Mt. Crawford		
		✓*	Libby Clark, Mt. Crawford		<b>Others</b>
	<b>Rockingham County</b>	✓	Gary Corder, Dayton	✓*	Shane McCabe, VDOT
	Sallie Wolfe-Garrison		Jeff Lineberry, VDOT	✓*	Chuck Conrad, VHB
✓	Casey Armstrong	✓	Adam Campbell, VDOT		
	<b>Town of Bridgewater</b>	✓	Don Komara, VDOT		
	Jay Litten	✓	Burgess Lindsay		
		✓	Jeremy Mason, VDOT		
	<b>Town of Dayton</b>		<b>Non-Voting Members</b>		
✓	Brian Borne		Kevin Jones, FHWA		
	<b>Town of Mt. Crawford</b>	✓*	Rusty Harrington, Aviation		
✓	Neal Dillard, Vice Chair	✓*	Grace Stankus, DRPT		
	<b>VDOT</b>		Bill Yates, JMU		
✓	Todd Stevens		Valerie Kramer, JMU		

\*Indicates virtual attendance

### Call to Order

The May 22, 2025, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (HRMPO) Policy Board meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Vice Chair Neal Dillard. The regularly scheduled meeting was scheduled for May 15; however, the May meeting was rescheduled for May 22 to accommodate MPO members attending the May 15 VDOT Six Year Improvement Plan (SYIP) meeting.

### Approval of Minutes

Vice Chairperson Dillard presented the minutes from the April 17, 2025, Policy Board meeting.

*Mr. Dany Fleming moved to approve the minutes; seconded by Ms. Cheryl Spain. The motion carried unanimously.*

## **Public Comment**

Vice Chair Dillard opened the floor for public comment. There were no public comments.

### **HRMPO Policy Board Election of Officers (Board Action Form #25-05)**

Ms. Paula Melester reported that the current chair and vice chair terms expire on June 30, 2025, requiring election of new officers for terms beginning July 1, 2025. The nominating committee met and put forth nominations of Mayor Dillard as chair and Council member Dent as vice chair. Mr. Fleming noted that Laura Dent was thanked for her service as chair and willingness to continue as vice chair, but was unavailable for the meeting. The three-member nominating committee unanimously agreed on the slate of officers.

*Mr. Fleming moved to approve the election of officers as recommended; seconded by Mr. Casy Armstrong. The motion carried unanimously.*

### **FY2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment Release for Public Comment and Administrative Modification (Board Action Form #25-06)**

Mr. Zach Beard presented a TIP amendment requesting Board approval for release for a 21-day public comment period and conditional approval pending no public comments. The amendment includes one VDOT-requested modification for the I-81 northbound and southbound three-lane widening project from mile markers 242 to 248 in Rockingham County, which releases new funds for each phase of the project in FY 25. The total project cost is \$301 million. Mr. Adam Campbell noted the project is ready for FHWA authorization of the construction phase and needs updated numbers for expenditures in the next four years.

Mr. Beard also reported one DRPT administrative modification for Section 5310 human services funding for Pleasant View, adding \$172,000 of new funding for their transit-related expenses under three different allocations for FY 25. This modification also changes contribution for matching funds by human service providers.

*Mr. Fleming moved to approve the public release of the amendments to the FY 2024-2027 TIP for a 21-day public comment period and to approve the amendment pending no public comments; seconded by Mr. Armstrong. The motion carried unanimously.*

### **Presentation: Port Republic Road, Neff Avenue, and Peach Grove Avenue Small Area Study Recommendations**

Mr. Chuck Conran from VHB presented the final recommendations from the nine-month Port Republic Road small area study conducted in coordination with the city, county, VDOT, and other partners. The study focused on the Port Republic, Peach Grove, and Neff Avenue intersection with four additional study intersections in the vicinity.

Mr. Conran explained the study goals included holistic transportation planning for the next 20 years of growth, analyzing existing and future transportation constraints rather than relying on individual traffic studies, and informing updates to regional planning documents. The study area was selected due to its

placement on the statewide needs list for pedestrian, bicycle, and safety improvements, representing some of the highest-ranked locations within the VDOT Staunton district.

### ***Study Data and Analysis***

The study documented significant development growth in the area, including approximately 800 residential units and a 100-room hotel. Traffic data collection included intersection counts and 48-hour volume and speed data. A speed study of Peach Grove Avenue showed average speeds of 31 mph with 85th percentile speeds of 37 mph, compared to the posted 25 mph limit. The study team decided to maintain the 25 mph posted speed limit due to Stone Spring Elementary School presence, unbuffered bike lanes, and limited sight distance at several intersections.

Crash analysis revealed approximately 150 crashes over five years, with about one-third being rear-end collisions, one-third angle crashes, one-third occurring at night, and about two-thirds involving young drivers aged 15-21. At the Port Republic/Peach Grove/Neff Avenue intersection, 22 crashes occurred between northbound Port Republic through vehicles and southbound left turns onto Neff Avenue, with 14 of those occurring at night.

### ***Future Projections and Operational Analysis***

Using a 2045 horizon year, the study projected 2% annual growth on Port Republic south of the Neff/Peach Grove intersection and on Peach Grove, with 0.75% annually north of the intersection. The Port Republic/Peach Grove/Neff Avenue intersection is projected to deteriorate from Level of Service D to Level of Service F, with three major movements averaging more than 100 seconds of delay per vehicle. Neff Avenue queuing would extend back about 2,000 feet, and southbound Port Republic queuing would extend past shopping center driveway accesses.

### ***Study Recommendations***

Mr. Conran presented study recommendations and a preferred alternative for Smart Scale funding consideration:

#### *Study Recommendations (not seeking near-term Smart Scale funding):*

- Shared use paths on Neff Avenue (from Port Republic Road to Arboretum Crosswalk) and Peach Grove Avenue (from Stone Spring Elementary to Port Republic Road)
- Expanding the north of Devon Lane bike lane to two-way bike traffic
- Two pedestrian crossings with pedestrian hybrid beacons at Deer Run and Wine Drive/Portland Drive
- Speed management techniques on Peach Grove Avenue using raised medians and pedestrian refuge islands

#### *Preferred Alternative (for Smart Scale Round 7 submittal in summer 2026):*

- Shared use path on Port Republic Road between Devon Lane and Peach Grove/Neff Avenue intersection
- Devon Lane intersection improvements: widening the approach to add a second left turn lane and removing channelized right turn

- Port Republic/Peach Grove/Neff Avenue intersection expansion: widening southbound Port Republic to add second left turn lane, extending right turn lane on Neff Avenue, and extending eastbound left turn lane on Peach Grove Avenue

The preferred alternative includes truncating the existing two-way left turn lane south of Devon Lane to provide more width around existing retaining walls and removing one non-structural retaining wall. The planning-level cost estimate is \$12.1 million in 2025 dollars, escalating to approximately \$16-17 million with inflation.

Mr. Conran noted that public engagement showed strong support for the concepts, with shared use paths receiving 91-93% support, the Devon Lane improvements receiving 81% support, and the expanded intersection receiving 87% support.

### **Agency Updates**

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

Mr. Adam Campbell provided the following updates:

- Vine Street Small Area Study: Completed future conditions and alternatives stakeholder meeting in April with follow-up meetings scheduled with city staff. Another round of public outreach is planned for later this summer.
- Route 42 Project Pipeline Study: Analyzing Route 42 from Gay Street north to city limits for safety, operational, and multimodal improvements. An online survey received 783 participants; two in-person meetings held with 40-50 attendees at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community and 20-30 at City Hall.
- Transportation Alternatives and Revenue Sharing pre-applications are due May 30.
- The I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan update held an online survey in April and plans first round in-person meetings for mid-summer.
- The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) voted to adopt the consensus scenario for Smart Scale. In the Staunton District, the consensus scenario differed from the staff-recommended scenario by removing the Waynesboro Transit Access project (\$2.6 million) and replacing it with a project in Frederick County (\$8 million) for a reduced conflict intersection on US 50. \$2.7 million remains in the district fund and will be carried over into the district reserve to help cover cost increases on other projects.

Mr. Don Komara provided additional updates:

- Memorial Day weekend expected to be highest travel weekend with 4% increase anticipated over last year.
- I-81 widening project south of Harrisonburg progressing with Jersey barriers installed; 60 mph speed limit enforced through construction zone.
- I-81 improvements from Exit 225 to 221 through Staunton making good progress with significant earthwork and bridge widening.
- Route 33 bridge over East Market Street in Harrisonburg making progress with demolition of final section with completion anticipated in the summer.

- Route 33 mountain project to West Virginia continuing with curve softening work, and the project is expected to be complete in June.
- Route 11 four-lane project by fairgrounds continuing with signal installation at Island Ford intersection.
- The CTB will meet in the Staunton District in July in Winchester at the George Washington Hotel.

*Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)*

Ms. Grace Stankus provided the following updates:

- DRPT is sponsoring a National Transit Institute public involvement in transportation decision-making course July 8-10 at Reynolds Community College in Richmond. The course is eligible for reimbursement through 5303, RTAP, and small urban training funds
- Reminder that 5303 applications are due June 2.
- Revised master agreement must be sent to DRPT no later than June 20.

*Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation (HDPT)*

Ms. Cheryl Spain provided the following update:

- HDPT has extended service hours through August 16.
- The HDPT microtransit service began on May 19. Ridership data showed zero riders the first day, 12 riders the second day, and four riders on the third day. The service is app-based and operates within a single zone, with some limitations when passengers want to travel outside the designated zone to locations like Food Max.

**Locality Updates**

*Town of Bridgewater*

The Town reported no updates.

*Town of Dayton*

The Town reported no updates.

*City of Harrisonburg*

Mr. Tom Hartman provided the following updates:

- Reservoir Street and Erickson Avenue/East Market Street traffic signal upgrade from span wire to mast arm: contractor in third week of foundation drilling, project awarded last July with June 30th completion deadline.
- Annual paving program ongoing throughout the city, with some delays due to water line breaks requiring repaving.
- South Main Street south of South Avenue: completing repairs with deep milling, sub-base reestablishment, and geogrid installation.



- University Boulevard extension through JMU: awarded to Partners Excavating at \$2 million under estimate with two bidders; construction signs expected end of June with heavy work in July and work concluding by 2026.
- Country Club Road sidewalk project between Mobile Home Park and Linda Lane: two competitive bids received, with one bid \$80,000 under the estimate.
- Safe Streets for All grant: working through multiple rounds of agreement changes with FHWA to create transportation safety action plan, pedestrian plan update, complete streets guide, and safe routes to school plan.
- Safe routes to school program: over 200 kids participated in bike/walk/roll to school day last week

#### *Town of Mount Crawford*

Vice Chair Dillard noted that the signal at the Sheetz on Friedens Church Road is working well.

#### *Rockingham County*

The County reported no updates.

#### **Other Business**

There was no other business.

#### **Upcoming Meetings**

Vice Chair Dillard noted that the next TAC meeting is scheduled for June 5, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. The regularly scheduled June Policy Board meeting conflicts with the Juneteenth holiday and is cancelled. The next Policy Board meeting is scheduled for July 17, 2025.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Paula Melester". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paula Melester, Director of Transportation

A small, faint handwritten signature or mark, possibly initials, located at the bottom center of the page.