

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Minutes April 3, 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	✓	Burgess Lindsey	✓	Zach Beard
✓	Gerald Gatobu	✓*	Shane McCabe		Others
✓	Jakob zumFelde		DPRT	✓	Kim Sandum
✓	James Polhamus				
	Rockingham County	✓*	Grace Stankus	✓	Julia Cottrell
	Rachel Salatin		Non-Voting Members		
✓	Dylan Nicely, Vice Chair		Kevin Jones, FHWA		
	Town of Bridgewater		Chelsea Beytas, FTA		
✓	Alex Wilmer		Bill Yates, JMU		
	Town of Dayton		Rusty Harrington, Aviation		
✓	Brian Borne		Valerie Kramer, JMU		
	Town of Mt. Crawford				
✓*	Bobby Taylor				

***Virtual attendance**

Call to Order

The April 3, 2025, meeting of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (HRMPO) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Vice Chairperson Dylan Nicely. Pursuant to §2.2-3708.2 of the Code of Virginia, HRMPO TAC members may participate in meetings through electronic communication means. Those who attended virtually are indicated by an asterisk; all others attended in-person.

Minutes

Vice Chairperson Dylan Nicely presented the minutes from the February 6, 2025, TAC meeting.

Mr. Jakob zumFelde motioned to approve the minutes; seconded by Mr. James Polhamus. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Vice Chairperson Dylan Nicely opened the floor for public comment. There were no public comments.

HRMPO Draft FY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Release for Public Comment and Conditional Approval (TAC Action Form #25-02)

Mr. Zach Beard presented the HRMPO draft FY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and explained that HRMPO staff is requesting that the TAC recommend that the Policy Board release the draft UPWP for a 21-day public comment period and conditionally approve the document pending no public comments.

The UPWP is the HRMPO's annual work program and budget and documents upcoming work activities for administration and public engagement, long-range planning, short-range planning, local and state assistance, and transit planning assistance.

Mr. Beard reviewed the FY 2026 budget compared to the previous year and noted that the FTA Section 5303 carryover line showing \$35,000 is an estimate, as final numbers from DRPT are not received until later in the year, though the total should not fluctuate much. For the upcoming fiscal year, HRMPO work will focus on conducting a new small area study after finalizing the current Port Republic Road small area study with the City of Harrisonburg. Staff has been working with Rockingham County staff and VDOT to identify a study location for the county.

Mr. Brian Borne motioned to recommend that the Policy Board release the document for a 21-day public comment period with conditional approval pending no public comments; seconded by Mr. Gerald Gatobu. Motion carried unanimously.

FY2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program Amendments (TAC Action Form #25-03)

Mr. Beard presented three amendments to the FY2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and requested that the TAC recommend that the Policy Board release the document for a 21-day public comment period and conditionally approve the document pending no public comments. The TIP primarily documents all transportation and transit projects receiving federal funding. The document is adjusted throughout the year to reflect updates and funding changes for projects.

DRPT requested three new amendments for the following TIP blocks:

1. HAR0001: 5307 Operating Assistance for through FY24-27.
2. HAR0015: Moved funding from FY27 to FY26 and increased the total project amount.
3. HAR0004: Paratransit replacement buses: Adjusted funding to reflect specific price changes in FY26 and FY27

Mr. Beard explained that amendments are substantial changes requiring public notice and board approval, defined as either adding completely new projects or changes over \$2 million to existing project funding.

Mr. Brian Borne motioned to recommend that the Policy Board release the three amendments for a 21-day public comment period with conditional approval pending no public comments; seconded by Mr. Jakob zumFelde. Motion carried unanimously.

Presentation: Port Republic Road – Peach Grove – Neff Avenue Study Public Engagement Summary (TAC Memo #25-03)

Mr. Garreth Bartholomew presented the public engagement summary for the Port Republic Road – Peach Grove – Neff Avenue intersection study. The study is evaluating current traffic volumes of 27,000 vehicles per day on Port Republic Road north, 14,000 on Port Republic Road south, 10,000 on Peach Grove, and 20,000 on Neff Avenue. The study was initiated due to projected growth driven by new commercial development near Exit 245 and over 1,000 projected student beds from housing developments. Growth projections estimate 15% increases in the northern study area and 40-42% growth on Peach Grove and southern Port Republic Road sections.

Public engagement utilized an interactive map survey through Social Pinpoint platform, including a public meeting at Stone Spring Elementary with 35 attendees, and a JMU focus group with students, staff, and faculty. The process generated 231 total contributions.

The study's multi-modal recommendations include:

- Removing the separated right-turn lane at Devon Lane intersection while maintaining on-street parking and Adding a dedicated left-turn lane
- A 13-foot shared-use path on the east side near the JMU Athletics facility was selected.
- A pedestrian hybrid beacon relocated to the south side of Kelsey Lane at Deer Run,
- Shared use paths will be installed on both sides of the main intersection extending from Dreams Come True Park to Stone Spring Elementary.

For the main intersection, the expanded intersection design was the preferred concept over the quadrant design due to concerns about driver confusion, especially among the transient student population. The expanded design includes dual left-turn lanes from Port Republic to Neff, an extended right-turn lane on Neff stretching 150 feet back, and an extended left-turn lane from Peach Grove extending 100 feet. This configuration is projected to reduce 2045 evening delay by 40 seconds. The study will conclude with a final study group meeting on April 25, 2025, followed by draft report and Board briefing in May and the final report completion in June.

Agency Updates

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

Mr. Adam Campbell provided comprehensive updates on several ongoing initiatives:

- Vine Street STARS Study completed an existing conditions stakeholder meeting at the end of January, and District Planning reviewed the information. The second study team meeting is scheduled for April 22 at 1:30 p.m. and will focus on alternatives assessment and recommendations.
- The VDOT Route 42 Project Pipeline Study in Harrisonburg, which is studying an area along Route 42 from Gay Street to the Northern City Limits, is scheduled for April 7 at 1:00 p.m.

- The VDOT Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) Meeting is scheduled for May 15 at 4:00 p.m. at Blue Ridge Community College's Plecker Center near the Weyers Cave exit. The draft six-year plan is expected within the next week or two based on SmartScale staff recommendations from January. The Staunton District has \$8 million in unassigned district grant funds available, and the Commonwealth Transportation Board will consider public feedback before adopting the final program at June CTB meeting.
- The state has launched an update to the 2018 I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan, reassessing four measures of effectiveness: crash frequency, crash severity, person hours of delay, and person hours of incident delay along the I-81 corridor. The 323-mile corridor has been divided into one-mile segments for analysis, and VDOT launched a public survey with a mapping component on the Improve I-81 website. The survey remains open until April 15, with completion expected by the end of 2025.
- Additionally, the Phase I report for the Shenandoah Rail Trail rail-to-trail study is now available, with VDOT scheduling three public meetings on April 8 in Timberville, April 10 in Front Royal, and April 15 in Woodstock.

Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)

Ms. Grace Stankus reported that DRPT the following:

- DRPT is finalizing FY26 funding recommendations for rail and transit projects, with the draft SYIP planned for release on April 15. DRPT representatives will be present at the Staunton District meeting on May 15
- Registration is open for the Virginia Transit Association's annual conference and expo on for May 28-29 in Richmond.

City of Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation (HDPT)

Mr. Gerald Gatobu reported the following:

- HDPT is conducting hiring for fall operations and planning summer routes.
- City routes 1-6 will extend service until 10:00 p.m. after JMU closure, continuing the successful summer service for city residents that was implemented the previous year.

Localities

Rockingham County

Mr. Dylan Nicely announced the hiring of new planner Julia Cottrell. Ms. Cottrell previously served as chief of staff for a board member from Prince William County and worked as a land use specialist. Ms. Cottrell is expected to attend future TAC meetings.

Other Business

Staff reminded the TAC that the FY2026-2031 Staunton District SYIP meeting is scheduled for May 15, 2025, at Blue Ridge Community College.

Upcoming Meetings

The next HRMPO Policy Board meeting is on April 17, 2025, at 3:00 p.m., and the next HRMPO TAC meeting is on May 1, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Zach Beard, Program Manager