

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Minutes September 4, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

Meeting conducted at Rockingham County Administration Center and 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
✓	Cheryl Spain				Others
✓	Jakob zumFelde		DPRT	✓	Kim Sandum
	James Polhamus	✓*	Grace Stankus	✓*	Sam Steyers
	Rockingham County			✓*	Weston Marcus
	Rachel Salatin		Non-Voting Members		
✓	Dylan Nicely, Vice Chair		Kevin Jones, FHWA		
	Julia Cottrell		Bill Yates, JMU		
	Town of Bridgewater		Rusty Harrington, DOAV		
✓	Alex Wilmer	✓	Valerie Kramer, JMU		
	Town of Dayton				
✓	Gary Corder				
	Town of Mt. Crawford				
	Libby Clark				

***Virtual attendance**

Call to Order

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (HRMPO) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) convened at the Rockingham County Administration Center on September 4, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Chair Tom Hartman.

Minutes

Chair Hartman presented the minutes from the August 7, 2025, TAC meeting.

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

Public Comment

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

HRMPO Internal Process Review Stakeholder Consultation Update and Discussion (TAC Memo #25-07)

Ms. Paula Melester presented an update on the HRMPO internal process review stakeholder consultations. Ms. Melester explained that between July and August 2025, staff conducted individual meetings with all MPO member localities and agency partners to discuss local transportation priorities, regional needs, the role of the MPO, and administrative improvements.

Local Priorities

Key themes from locality priorities included managing growth and economic development impacts on transportation networks, improving safety and accessibility for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and transit access, maintaining and improving existing infrastructure, and finding fundable projects that meet local needs. Localities identified challenges with small-scale intersection changes, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and uniquely for the region, buggy lanes and alleyway systems that struggle to align with existing grant program criteria.

Regional Priorities

Ms. Melester noted that as part of the regional priorities, localities emphasized I-81 as the most significant transportation need, including filling funding gaps and addressing impacts on parallel roadways throughout the Valley. Localities requested MPO support for region-wide master planning including bicycle and pedestrian connectivity across jurisdictions, management of major regional corridors like Routes 11 and 42 that serve dual roles as local community roads and commercial corridors, and expanded transit connectivity and partnerships between HDPT, BRITE, and Virginia Breeze.

Role of the MPO

Regarding the MPO's role, Ms. Melester stated that stakeholders emphasized the value of serving as a regional convener, providing capacity support for local transportation planning activities, transit planning coordination, and serving as an information and knowledge resource hub. Ms. Melester noted that state partners commended the HRMPO's approach to integrating HDPT's transit planning with broader regional MPO planning through UPWP budget structure.

Administrative Improvements

For administrative improvements, Ms. Melester stated that stakeholders expressed strong preference for monthly in-person meetings, with meeting frequency well-received. Stakeholders also suggested improvements to meeting mail-outs and materials to enhance accessibility.

Next Steps

Ms. Melester outlined next steps including updating core governing documents and developing the FY27 UPWP to align with stakeholder input. Staff will conduct follow-up meetings with localities in spring 2026 before developing the annual work program, with implementation targeted for completion in Spring 2026.

Presentation: HRMPO Regional VDOT Crash Analysis Overview and Data Gaps – HRMPO and City of Harrisonburg Staff

Mr. Garreth Bartholomew presented an overview of regional safety trends and crash data collection processes. Mr. Bartholomew reviewed statewide safety trends with the TAC and HRMPO's approved 2025 safety targets compared to actual performance data through April 2025.

Overview

Mr. Bartholomew explained that Virginia Code requires police reports for crashes involving injury, death, or property damage equal to or exceeding \$3,000. When crashes occur, law enforcement reports are submitted to DMV's Traffic Records Electronic Data System (TREDS) and subsequently transmitted to VDOT. Reports must be filed within 24 hours of investigation, with the system capturing over 170 data elements per crash incident. Data has approximately three-month lag time before appearing in planning databases.

Mr. Bartholomew identified data gaps including crashes below the \$3,000 property damage threshold that are not required to be reported and subject to investigating officer discretion, near-miss incidents not captured, private property crashes that may not be reported, and limitations in holistic context that investigating officers can provide beyond quantitative data elements. Mr. Bartholomew stated that beyond annual safety target approvals, the MPO will conduct more frequent safety performance updates to provide timely data and trend analysis.

Harrisonburg Data

Mr. Jakob zumFelde presented the City of Harrisonburg's crash data analysis approach. Mr. zumFelde explained that the City's Transportation Safety Advisory Commission includes five resident members plus representation from Public Works, Police Department, Fire Department, and JMU. The commission addresses safety-related projects and concerns, locations where residents express concerns, locations where safety studies are completed, and proposed capital projects. A Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee was created in 2010, which receives annual presentations on crash data.

Mr. zumFelde detailed that Harrisonburg Public Works and Police Departments review crash data using two primary VDOT public data sources created from Virginia DMV TREDS data: the Crash Analysis Tool and Crash Map, both containing only reportable crashes. Mr. zumFelde displayed a pedestrian crash map covering 2017 through March 2025 and pedestrian count data from April 2025 collected by Miovision detection cameras, noting accuracy has not been verified by City staff. Mr. zumFelde reported the City is establishing twice-yearly meetings between Public Works and Police Department to review crash numbers and observations including non-reportable crashes and discuss trends.

Discussion

Discussion ensued regarding data collection capabilities and police department coordination. Mr. Kyle Lawrence inquired whether other localities within the MPO have ability to conduct pedestrian counts at intersections using cameras. Mr. zumFelde confirmed the City has intersection count cameras and individual pedestrian counters, with camera counts covering entire intersections and plans to expand to additional intersections as budget allows. Mr. Hartman noted accuracy concerns particularly for

pedestrian and bicycle counts in locations with pedestrian scrambles and high-volume crossings near JMU, estimating vehicle count accuracy sufficient for Traffic Impact Analyses (TIAs).

Mr. Alex Wilmer reported that approximately five years ago, the Bridgewater Police Department upgraded computer systems, now integrated with the County. The system enables Mr. Wilmer to request at least five years of crash data from the police department for traffic studies, replacing previous reliance on paper files. Mr. Wilmer noted that the town has access to local crash data and plans to upgrade intersections and eventually conduct pedestrian counts.

Mr. Hartman described benefits of establishing ongoing police department coordination, citing discovery that the Police Chief mentioned 19 pedestrian crashes by May or June, with significant portion occurring in parking lots and shopping centers that would not be reportable but warrant planning awareness. Mr. zumFelde noted the coordination provides connection between planning staff and police department, establishing communication pathways and enabling analysis of shorter time periods rather than standard five-year aggregations.

Ms. Melester noted that while VDOT reportable crash data serves as the metric for determining safety improvement criteria in funding programs, local police data can bolster project narratives and support projects not seeking federal funding or funding through systems requiring only reportable data. Ms. Melester offered MPO staff assistance to localities unfamiliar with VDOT tools, including dashboard walkthroughs and quick statistical support for council or board presentations.

Agency Updates

Virginia *Department of Transportation (VDOT)*

Mr. Adam Campbell provided the following updates:

- The full application submission deadline of September 15, 2025, for Transportation Alternatives and Revenue Sharing programs is approaching.
- The Route 42 Project Pipeline study in the City of Harrisonburg from 8th Street to the northern city limits completed Phase 1 covering existing conditions and preliminary alternatives consideration. Phase 2 will conduct deeper analysis of alternatives under consideration. The Executive Summary from Phase 1 providing high-level overview of identified corridor issues and recommendations under consideration is available on the Project Pipeline website.
- The Vine Street STARS study held a study team meeting two weeks ago for further alternatives review, identifying options to advance for second round of public input. An online survey is anticipated to launch in early October, with coordination for concurrent in-person meeting with city staff.
- The Route 259 Mainland Road STARS study from the interstate to Broadway, located just north of the MPO in Rockingham County, is launching its second public outreach for feedback on alternatives under consideration September 9 - 23, 2025.
- The I-81 2025 Corridor Improvement Program update is incorporating public feedback from July meetings. Third round of public meetings are planned for late October, presenting

projects prioritized through a process similar to SMART Scale scoring criteria and divided by cost to identify top priorities within available funding.

Mr. Don Komara and Mr. Jeremy Mason provided the following updates:

- The I-81 improvements through Staunton represent a three-year contract that is approximately 50% complete after one year. Mr. Komara noted contractor incentive to complete work ahead of schedule, as extended timelines reduce profitability.
- On safety improvements, VDOT receives approximately \$300,000 to \$400,000 annually in safety improvement funding to address small-scale improvements identified by area superintendents and community feedback, including turn lanes and outcropping removal. This discretionary funding covers projects in Rockingham, Augusta, and Page counties.
- The East Market Street (Route 33) bridge project is setting beams and installing stay-in-place forms for the final section. Crews will tie steel and pour concrete by end of September. The concrete pour requires a small traffic closure window due to settling and stiffening requirements and vibration sensitivity. The project remains on schedule, on budget, slightly under budget, and significantly lower cost than other bidders.
- The Fairgrounds project continues progressing despite challenges including business sales. The project is anticipated to reach construction phase next year.
- Speed enforcement cameras on I-81 through the Staunton widening project are expected to begin operation next month or the following month, administered by Virginia State Police. Mr. Komara reiterated that VDOT cannot assist drivers who receive tickets for exceeding 60 mph in the work zone.
- Current VDOT activities include asphalt patching, signing up snow removal equipment, and filling salt domes throughout the district.
- The Harrisonburg project remains on schedule for next year, with contract award anticipated in December 2025. The project has generated strong contractor interest, with companies inquiring about working in the region. Mr. Komara noted Kokosing is located far from the region, potentially generating competitive bids.
- Mr. Mason noted that federal speed enforcement cameras have already been implemented on Route 64 east of Richmond on construction projects. Current plans call for cameras only on the Staunton I-81 project, not on climbing lanes. Discussion addressed potential for drivers to exit the interstate to avoid camera enforcement.

Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)

Ms. Grace Stankus provided no updates.

City of Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation (HDPT)

Ms. Cheryl Spain provided the following updates:

- HDPT is preparing for JMU's return with successful driver recruitment, though expansion plans depend on available drivers.

- The microtransit project completed 1,000 trips. Staff will evaluate whether to restart the program next summer, as year-round operation is not feasible due to driver availability constraints.
- HDPT is prepared for FY27 grant cycles. A request for proposals (RFP) will be issued this week to replace the transit system software in a \$3 million project, with hopes for competitive bids to upgrade the system.

Localities and Stakeholders

Town of Dayton

Mr. Gary Corder thanked staff for the presentation and indicated he will investigate whether the Dayton Police Department tracks crash data, noting the department operates relatively independently from community development. Mr. Corder expressed interest in pursuing conversations about local crash data coordination.

Town of Bridgewater

Mr. Wilmer provided no updates.

James Madison University

Ms. Valerie Kramer provided the following update:

- The Duke's Ride campaign, which is in the second year, encourages students to ride buses instead of driving. Despite distributing 2,000 welcome packets to apartment complexes with bus information, challenges remain with low ridership except for the Green Line. New tactics include reaching out to parents to emphasize the free service and inability to receive parking tickets while on the bus. HDPT has provided statistics to track ridership trends.

Rockingham County

Mr. Nicely provided the following updates:

- The County is working extensively with VDOT to prepare revenue sharing project applications for the September 15, 2025, deadline, including requesting another allocation for the Route 253-276 Cross Keys and Port Republic Road project due to increased cost estimates, shoulder widening on Airport Road as a continuation of previous bridge work, and a project to lower vertical curve sight distance on Friedens Church and Oak Ridge to address visibility concerns when looking left over a hill, completing work deferred during previous church curb project due to funding shortfall.

City of Harrisonburg

Chair Hartman provided the following updates:

- University Boulevard construction continues with contractors progressing on the new road alignment, though rock was discovered in a pond area requiring removal.

- Country Club Road sidewalk construction between the trailer park and Linda Lane is underway, missing the back-to-school deadline but targeting completion for Bike Walk and Roll to School Day at month's end.
- The Erickson Avenue study public meeting is scheduled September 18, 2025, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., presenting future land use analysis for the corridor between Main Street and Route 42 (east-west) and Pleasant Hill Road and Mosby Road (north-south), including projected development, new roadway connections, and intersection improvements to mitigate development impacts. An online survey will launch after the public meeting, with final report presented to the TAC at a future meeting to share results and potential grant opportunities.
- The Liberty Street raised cycle track project completed 30% plans, with environmental documents in progress. The City is planning a Citizen Information Meeting for early December to re-engage the public, present concepts, and identify concerns or opportunities before advancing to next plan phase leading to right-of-way and utility relocation.
- Bike Walk and Roll to School Day is scheduled for October 8, 2025. The City has a TAP grant for a Safe Routes to School Coordinator position.
- The City submitted one revenue sharing application to supplement a funding shortfall on the Route 243 project, where low cost estimates and inflation created budget gaps. Special funds are available as construction dollars rather than right-of-way dollars.
- Pedestrian crossing volumes remained consistent. The public survey remains open through the end of the month for feedback on the demonstration configuration.

Other Business

There was no other business discussed.

Upcoming Meetings

The Policy Board will meet September 18, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. The next Technical Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 2, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. Both meetings will be at the Rockingham County Administration Center.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Zach Beard, Program Manager