

## Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Minutes January 8, 2026, 2:00 p.m.

**Meeting conducted at Rockingham County Administration Center and virtually via Teams**

	<b>City of Harrisonburg</b>		<b>VDOT</b>		<b>Staff</b>
✓	Tom Hartman, Chair	✓	Adam Campbell	✓*	Paula Melester
✓	Kyle Lawrence	✓	Don Komara	✓	Garreth Bartholomew
✓	Thanh Dang	✓	Jeremy Mason	✓	Zach Beard
	Cheryl Spain	✓*	Shane McCabe		<b>Others</b>
✓	Jakob zumFelde		<b>DPRT</b>	✓	Kim Sandum
	James Polhamus	✓*	Grace Stankus		
	<b>Rockingham County</b>				
	Rachel Salatin		<b>Non-Voting Members</b>		
✓	Dylan Nicely, Vice Chair		Kevin Jones, FHWA		
	Julia Cottrell		Bill Yates, JMU		
	<b>Town of Bridgewater</b>		Rusty Harrington, DOAV		
✓	Alex Wilmer	✓*	Valerie Kramer, JMU		
	<b>Town of Dayton</b>				
✓	Gary Corder				
	<b>Town of Mt. Crawford</b>				
	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 January 8, 2026. The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Chair Tom Hartman.

### Minutes

Chair Hartman presented the minutes from the November 6, 2025, TAC meeting. Mr. Garreth Bartholomew noted two corrections: a reference to the SAWMPO bylaws should be corrected to HRMPO bylaws, and a reference to a sidewalk project on Country Club Road should be corrected to Route 11.

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

### Public Comment

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

### **Public Participation Plan (PPP) Release for Public Comment (TAC AF #26-01)**

Mr. Zach Beard presented proposed updates to the HRMPO Public Participation Plan (PPP). Mr. Beard explained that as part of the MPO's internal review process over the past six months, staff determined that a comprehensive update to the PPP was needed to address technical jargon, streamline processes, and align with peer MPO practices across Virginia.

The most substantial changes relate to public comment periods. Staff reduced minimum public comment timeframes for most MPO activities to align with other Virginia MPOs, with the exception of the PPP itself, which is federally required to have a 45-day comment period. Mr. Beard noted these are minimum requirements and can be extended on a project-specific basis.

Chair Hartman inquired about discrepancies in the handout regarding UPWP amendments, which Mr. Beard confirmed should show 14 days, not 21 days. Chair Hartman also asked whether reducing comment periods would impact public input; Mr. Beard responded that outside of active LRTP updates and study-related engagement, the MPO typically does not receive comments on routine items.

Additional changes include reducing accessibility service request timeframes from seven to three working days, removing specific staff response time requirements for general inquiries while maintaining FOIA compliance, eliminating the requirement to publish most notices in print newspapers (with exceptions for the PPP and annual meeting calendar), removing the requirement to notify adjacent property owners directly for studies, consolidating nine public participation goals into four main goals, and restructuring the document from six sections to four.

*Ms. Thanh Dang motioned to recommend that the Policy Board release the PPP for a 45-day public comment period; seconded by Mr. Don Komara. Motion carried unanimously.*

### **Virtual Meeting Policy Approval (TAC AF #26-02)**

Mr. Garreth Bartholomew presented the annual Virtual Meeting and Virtual Participation Policy for TAC review. Mr. Bartholomew explained that the Virginia Freedom of Information Act requires public bodies to review and readopt this policy annually.

The policy allows HRMPO members to participate remotely and permits a maximum of two all-virtual meetings per calendar year or 50 percent of total meetings, whichever is lower. Members with disabilities or caregiving responsibilities who participate remotely during hybrid meetings count toward a physical quorum. Virtual participation does not restrict voting rights.

Mr. Bartholomew noted that staff typically designates one virtual meeting in February and keeps the second allotted virtual meeting floating for weather or other circumstances. FOIA requires at least seven days public notice when switching from in-person to virtual format.

*Ms. Thanh Dang motioned to recommend approval of the Virtual Meeting Policy to the Policy Board; seconded by Mr. Dylan Nicely. Motion carried unanimously.*

## **N. Mason Street Small Area Study Update (TAC Memo #26-01)**

Mr. Beard provided an update on the North Mason Street Small Area Study. In late October, the City of Harrisonburg requested MPO assistance with developing a study to complement the City's North Mason Street Demonstration Project completed in summer 2025, with the goal of identifying a preferred concept for a Smart Scale application.

Staff developed a scope of work with the City and procured VHB to assist with the study. The study area extends from East Elizabeth Street to North Main Street, examining five intersections. VHB is currently conducting existing conditions analysis. The study team, including VHB, the City, and VDOT District Planning, is scheduled to meet January 16 to review VHB's work and reach consensus on two main concepts per intersection to advance to concept design.

Public engagement is planned for late February, with the study team working to meet the Smart Scale pre-application deadline of April 1. Mr. Beard noted staff would provide updates at future TAC meetings.

## **2026 Presentation Prioritization Poll and Discussion**

Mr. Bartholomew facilitated an interactive Mentimeter poll to gather TAC input on potential presentation topics for 2026. Mr. Bartholomew explained that staff wanted to ensure meetings include engaging content beyond administrative items.

The poll asked members to rank eight potential topics. Results ranked the topics as follows: (1) Economic Development and Transportation, (2) Emergency Management and Traffic Operations, (3) MPO On-Call Consultant Program, (4) Innovative Intersection Designs, (5) Updating Google Maps and Waze, (6) Federal Policy and Reauthorization, (7) DRPT Programs and Services Update, and (8) Truck Parking in the Valley.

Mr. Don Komara suggested hosting joint meetings between HRMPO and SAWMPO, similar to the joint meetings between SAWMPO and the Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO for I-64. Mr. Komara noted that with the significant I-81 construction projects underway, there would be value in both groups meeting to share information and discuss common issues. Chair Hartman suggested quarterly or semi-annual updates from I-81 project managers given the six-year duration of construction. Mr. Komara and Mr. Adam Campbell noted that the Harrisonburg widening project includes a communications consultant who will coordinate with localities.

## **Agency Updates**

*Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)*

Mr. Adam Campbell provided the following updates:

- For the Route 42 Project Pipeline Study, District Planning is summarizing public comments received on the improvement alternative survey. The alternative selection study team meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 20 at 2:00 p.m.

- For the Vine Street STARS Study, VDOT has completed an internal review of the draft final report. ATCS is addressing comments, with a finalized draft expected to be shared with the study team shortly.
- On the I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) approved the next I-81 improvements at their meeting earlier in the week. For the HRMPO region, approved projects include widening in both directions from Exit 238 to Exit 242, connecting the Weyers Cave truck climbing lanes to the upcoming Harrisonburg widening, and extending the southbound acceleration lane at Exit 251.
- District Planning is engaging with localities in lead up to Smart Scale Round 7. The pre-application window opens March 2 and closes April 1. The Round 7 technical guide has been posted to the Smart Scale website.

Mr. Don Komara provided the following updates:

- I-81 Staunton widening project: The project is approximately 60 percent complete. Kokosing continues to make good progress. Speed enforcement cameras are planned for March or April, with Virginia State Police coordinating.
- I-81 Weyers Cave project: The project is approximately 35 percent complete. Branch Highways has moved significant earthwork quantities and is working on bridges.
- Route 33 bridge project: The project is making good progress and is on schedule. The project leads into the I-81 widening from Exit 243 to Exit 248.
- I-81 Harrisonburg widening project: Triton was awarded the contract at \$218 million, with five bidders. The CTB approved the project. Construction will begin in the summer with surveying and shoulder widening, with work proceeding in three phases starting in the southern section near Pleasant Valley, then jumping north to the Route 33 area, and finishing the middle section. The project includes nine bridges.
- Route 11 sidewalk project (north of Harrisonburg): The project near the trailer park will go to advertisement in January with construction in spring.
- Route 11 widening project (south of Harrisonburg): The project near the Fairgrounds will go to advertisement March.
- Route 33 and Route 276 intersection improvements project: A public hearing is scheduled for February 3 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Keezletown Ruritan Club. The project will make permanent improvements to the R-cut configuration previously installed at the recreation center.

*Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)*

Ms. Grace Stankus provided an update:

- FY27 rail and transit grant applications are open through February 1.

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

There were no HDPT updates at this meeting.

## **Locality Updates**

### *Rockingham County*

Mr. Dylan Nicely thanked Mr. Komara and VDOT for their work and noted the County will be discussing potential Smart Scale applications with VDOT and the MPO.

### *City of Harrisonburg*

Chair Hartman provided the following updates:

- On the Exit 247/Route 33 Bridge, another full closure of East Market Street is planned for the week of January 26 to complete bridge floor work. Some ramps will remain open. Storm sewer work will also be completed during the closure.
- For the University Boulevard new roadway project, the configuration is in place but not yet open to traffic. Work on the JMU parking lot was completed during the restricted period. The project will resume in spring and be completed by year end.
- There are two Port Republic Road projects the City is working on. One project is extending the turn lane at Bluestone Drive and installing sidewalks, and the project is installing a signal with turn lanes and separated bike facilities east of I-81. Both projects are targeted for January advertisement with construction in 2026-2027.
- The City is making progress on their Railroad Relocation Grant and has conducted a solicitation for engineers and has selected a consultant, with contract negotiations underway. The project aims to relocate rail around the edge of the city and improve safety at the 19 at-grade crossings.

## **Other Business**

Mr. Bartholomew announced that staff will be meeting with localities in February regarding the FY27 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) update to ensure the UPWP captures locality priorities and identifies opportunities for MPO assistance.

## **Upcoming Meetings**

Chair Hartman announced that the Policy Board will meet on January 22, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. at the Rockingham County Administration Center, and the next TAC meeting will be held virtually via Teams on February 5, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Zach Beard, Program Manager