

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board Minutes April 16, 2026, 3:00 p.m.

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

	Voting Members		Alternates		Staff
	City of Harrisonburg	✓	Dylan Nicely, Rockingham		Ann Cundy
	Laura Dent, Vice Chair		Rachel Salatin, Rockingham	✓	Paula Melester
✓	Dany Fleming		Cheryl Spain, Harrisonburg	✓*	Garreth Bartholomew
✓	Gerald Gatobu	✓	Alex Wilmer, Bridgewater	✓	Zach Beard
	Nasser Alsaadun		Robert Taylor, Mt. Crawford		
	Ande Banks		Libby Clark, Mt. Crawford		
			Gary Corder, Dayton		Others
	Rockingham County		Jeff Lineberry, VDOT	✓	Jakob zumFelde, Harrisonburg
✓	Sallie Wolfe-Garrison	✓	Adam Campbell, VDOT		
	Casey Armstrong	✓	Don Komara, VDOT		
	Town of Bridgewater		Burgess Lindsey, VDOT		
	Jay Litten				
	Town of Dayton		Non-Voting Members		
✓	Brian Borne		Stephen Smiley, Aviation		
	Town of Mt. Crawford	✓*	Grace Stankus, DRPT		
✓	Dennis Driver, Chair	✓*	Bill Yates, JMU		
	VDOT		Valerie Kramer, JMU		
✓	Joel DeNunzio	✓*	Shane McCabe		

*Indicates virtual attendance

Call to Order

The April 16, 2026, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (HRMPO) Policy Board meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chair Dennis Driver.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Driver presented the minutes from the March 18, Policy Board meeting.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Sallie Wolfe-Garrison; seconded by Mr. Dany Fleming. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

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

Approval of Title VI Program and Implementation Plan (Board Action Form #26-08)

Ms. Paula Melester presented the 2026 CSPDC Title VI Program and Plan for final Board adoption. The Board voted at the March 19 meeting to release the plan for public comment pending preliminary Board review and the opportunity for written comments. The HRMPO received no public comments during the comment period. Ms. Melester requested that the Board formally adopt the plan.

A motion to approve the 2026 CSPDC Title VI Program and Plan was made by Mr. Fleming; seconded by Mr. Joel DeNunzio. The motion carried unanimously.

Release of FY27-30 Transportation Improvement Program for Public Comment and Conditional Approval (Board Action Form #26-09)

Mr. Zach Beard presented the FY27-30 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Board action. Staff requested that the Board release the document for a 14-day public comment period and grant conditional approval pending no substantial public comments.

The TIP is a four-year planning document updated on a three-year cycle. It documents all capital highway and transportation projects in the region scheduled to receive federal transportation funds, as well as non-capital projects such as pedestrian improvements, projects requiring federal action, and regionally significant projects that affect arterial roadway capacity. Federal regulations require the TIP to document how the region is meeting state and federal transportation performance targets related to safety and congestion. MPO staff coordinates the update directly with VDOT, DRPT, and HDPT. The current TIP covers FY24–27 and expires September 30, 2026. The new TIP will officially begin October 1, 2026, but VDOT and DRPT requested that it be finalized by the end of April. Once adopted, the HRMPO TIP is incorporated into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which FHWA and FTA review for acceptance.

For this cycle, staff restructured the document to address versioning and tracking problems that had created confusion for VDOT, DRPT, and HDPT. The new structure divides the document into three components: a main narrative document and two separate appendices, one for highway projects and one for transit projects. The current version of each appendix will be available on the HRMPO website. Mr. Beard noted that the delayed receipt of finalized highway project data from VDOT created a compressed timeline, necessitating the conditional approval request.

HDPT Transit projects are amended more frequently than highway projects because transit funding is allocated on an annual basis. Highway projects funded through grant programs such as Smart Scale are typically funded once and may remain unchanged for several years. Transit project funding amounts in the TIP are expressed in thousands, consistent with DRPT's standard format. The TAC reviewed the document at its April 1 meeting and recommended release for public comment.

A motion to release the FY27-30 TIP for a 14-day public comment period and grant conditional approval pending no substantial public comments was made by Mr. Fleming; seconded by Mr. DeNunzio. The Board approved the motion by unanimous vote.

FY27 Unified Planning Work Program Release for Public Comment (Board Action Form #26-10)

Ms. Paula Melester presented the draft FY27 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for Board action. The UPWP is a federally required annual document that outlines all MPO activities and projects for the coming fiscal year and identifies how MPO funding will be allocated to accomplish them. Staff develop the UPWP in coordination with locality staff and state and federal partner agencies to ensure both baseline federal requirements and the service needs of member localities are addressed.

The FY27 UPWP budget is approximately \$540,000, a slight increase from the prior year. The MPO receives funding from two primary sources: the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) via VDOT, and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) via DRPT. The budget also incorporates carryover funds from prior years; FY25 highway carryover and projected transit carryover are both healthy. Any reallocation of funds between programming categories requires a Board-approved amendment.

Ms. Melester provided updates on the following FY27 MPO activities:

- *Program Administration and Outreach:* Core administrative and compliance activities required to maintain MPO eligibility for federal transportation funds, estimated at approximately 800 to 900 staff hours annually.
- *Long-Range Planning:* This activity includes beginning the next Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update in the second half of the fiscal year, with an intended 18-month process that will carry through FY2028; completing the travel demand model that will support the LRTP update; and ongoing bicycle and pedestrian planning.
- *Short-Range Planning:* This activity includes ongoing TIP management and a new Rockingham County Small Area Study. The small area study will develop a roadway master plan for the Stone Spring Road and Ridgedale Road corridor, extending the recently completed Peach Grove Avenue and Neff Avenue study across the county line and examining Ridgedale Road's long-term configuration and access needs.
- *Local, State, and Federal Assistance:* This activity includes assisting the Town of Dayton with pedestrian and multimodal planning including a study of the town's historic alleyway and road network to identify town-owned connections and develop a connectivity plan. For the Town of Mt. Crawford, the MPO will provide pedestrian and multimodal planning support. Region-wide, staff will research sidewalk requirement policies to identify best practices and model language that localities could incorporate into site plan review standards to encourage pedestrian connections at the time of new development.
- *Transit Planning:* This activity includes providing pass-through funding to support HDPT with its regular transit planning activities including route planning, strategic planning, and grant and capital program management. Staff are also awaiting a determination on a DRPT technical assistance grant application for a Rockingham County transit service plan. If awarded, the MPO would provide a 50% match and the study would be largely consultant-led, with the scope already defined from a prior feasibility study.

A motion to release the draft FY27 Unified Planning Work Program for public comment was made by Mr. Fleming; seconded by Mr. DeNunzio. The motion carried unanimously

Agency Updates

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

Mr. Adam Campbell provided the following update:

- Smart Scale Round 7: The pre-application submission deadline passed on April 1. Thirty-three pre-applications were submitted across the Staunton District, with some submissions representing duplicates from both localities and planning district commissions to preserve flexibility in choosing which funding pool to pursue in the full application. Staff expect approximately 27 full applications will be submitted, which would match the total from the prior round. The state is currently pre-screening submissions. The full application window opens June 1, with a final submission deadline of August 3.
- FY27 Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) Spring Meeting: VDOT will present the draft FY27 SYIP including revenue sharing funding recommendations at a public meeting on April 28 at Blue Ridge Community College. The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) meeting with the revenue sharing scenario is scheduled for the following week; the agenda and revenue sharing scenario are already posted publicly. Staunton district applicants are seeing most or all of their requests funded, with \$33 million currently proposed for the district through revenue sharing.

Mr. Don Komara provided the following updates:

- Route 33 East Market Street Bridge: The project remains on track for an August 2026 completion. Mr. Komara noted that the new bridge eliminates an overheight-vehicle strike problem that previously affected both this structure and the former bridge at Smithland Road.
- Route 11 Sidewalk Project (Mt. Clinton Pike): A&J Construction was the low bidder out of five bids received. A pre-construction conference is scheduled for the following week. The project constructs sidewalk from the cemetery north to the mobile home park and is anticipated to take two construction seasons.
- I-81 Staunton Widening Project (Exits 221–225): The project is approximately 60% complete. Speed enforcement cameras were activated on April 1 and will issue warnings during the first 30 days before citations begin. Cameras are trailer-mounted and will move to different locations within the work zone. Completion is expected in fall 2026. Mr. Komara also noted that southbound I-81 lanes will be fully closed beginning Saturday evening at 8:00 p.m. for a traffic configuration change; the detour uses Route 262, reconnecting to I-81 at Exit 225. The closure is not expected to cause significant traffic issues based on a prior similar closure.
- I-81 Weyers Cave Widening Project: The project is approximately 42% complete. Blasting is required at a creek crossing to remove rock, and that work is anticipated within the next two weeks.
- I-81 Harrisonburg Widening Project: Night shoulder-strengthening work began Monday, April 13, starting at the southern end and proceeding northward. Barrier installation will follow, with significant daytime construction activity expected thereafter. Kokosing holds the \$218 million contract. The roundabout at Pleasant Valley School and the entrance at Walker are targeted for

completion in May 2027. Broad project activity is not anticipated until approximately January 2027.

- Route 11 Four-Lane Fairgrounds Project: Right-of-way has been cleared. Three remaining property owners signed agreements, and certificates were filed on the remaining parcels. The project goes to bid at the end of April, with bids opening in June. Construction is scheduled to begin after the Rockingham County Fair in September 2026. The project is a two-year effort; work will pause during the 2027 fair and complete before the 2028 fair. Mr. Komara confirmed he will share bid documents with Ms. Wolfe-Garrison upon opening.

Mr. DeNunzio provided the following updates:

- A public meeting on the rail-with-trails project will be held April 28 at the Plains District Community Center in Timberville from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., which is the same day at the Staunton District SYIP meeting; other rail-with-trail meetings are scheduled in the Valley.
- Work Zone Awareness Week: The current week is the National Work Zone Awareness Week, which originated at VDOT in 1997 before becoming a national initiative. Wednesday is Go Orange Day; Board members are encouraged to wear orange.

Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)

Ms. Grace Stankus provided the following updates:

- FY27 Six-Year Improvement Program: DRPT will release its draft FY27 SYIP with funding recommendations on Monday, April 20. DRPT representatives will be present at the April 28 Staunton District SYIP meeting. DRPT will also host a separate virtual public meeting on May 27 at 5:00 p.m. to receive comments on the recommended FY27 projects.
- Virginia Breeze Tidewater Current: The Virginia Breeze's fifth route, the Tidewater Current, launches on April 20 and will connect Harrisonburg to Virginia Beach via I-64 with one run in each direction daily. Tickets are available on the Virginia Breeze website.

Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation (HDPT)

Mr. Gerald Gatobu provided the following updates:

- Via Paratransit Software: The Via paratransit scheduling and booking platform launched at the end of March. The system is performing well and has improved response times. Staff are incorporating driver feedback and resolving permissions issues; a full evaluation will be conducted at the end of the month.
- New Fixed-Route ITS/AVL Software: HDPT is transitioning to a new intelligent transportation system and automatic vehicle location platform for its fixed-route buses this fall. The vendor completed a discovery session at HDPT approximately two weeks prior, covering installation logistics and schedule. Procurement and planning are proceeding on schedule.
- Driver Recruitment: HDPT is running radio advertisements now to recruit drivers for the fall, given the lead time required for hiring and training. Route planning for the fall is underway.

Locality Updates

Harrisonburg

Mr. Fleming provided the following updates:

- The Governor visited Harrisonburg for the I-81 construction groundbreaking.
- JMU released a new strategic plan. Goals include enrollment growth, a target of 60% of students living on campus, and management of increased traffic on the west side of campus. The plan includes ideas for increasing east-west inner-campus transit routes. City staff have begun preliminary discussions about the infrastructure needs associated with the plan.
- The Liberty Street project held a kickoff open house in fall 2025. The public hearing is now scheduled for May 19 at City Council Chambers from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Rockingham County

Mr. Dylan Nicely expressed support for the Smart Scale applications and revenue sharing projects being funded in the Staunton district.

Town of Bridgewater

The Town provided no updates.

Town of Dayton

The Town provided no updates.

The Town of Mount Crawford

Chair Driver provided the following update:

- I-81 experienced an approximately five-mile backup earlier in the day due to a tractor-trailer breakdown in the Mt. Crawford area.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Upcoming Meetings

Chair Driver announced that the TAC meeting scheduled for May 7, 2026, and the Policy Board meeting scheduled for May 21, 2026, have been cancelled. The next scheduled TAC and Policy Board meetings will be held in June 2026.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:52 p.m.

Respectfully,



Paula Melester, Director of Transportation