

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

Meeting conducted at Rockingham County Administration Center at 20 E Gay St, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 and virtually via Teams

	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	✓	Kayla Dixon
✓	James Polhamus	✓*	Grace Stankus		
	Rockingham County				
	Rachel Salatin		Non-Voting Members		
✓	Dylan Nicely, Vice Chair		Kevin Jones, FHWA		
✓	Julia Cottrell		Bill Yates, JMU		
	Town of Bridgewater		Stephen Smiley, DOAV		
✓	Alex Wilmer	✓	Valerie Kramer, JMU		
	Town of Dayton		Lora Grady, FTA		
✓*	Gary Corder				
	Town of Mt. Crawford				
✓	Libby Clark				

***Virtual attendance**

Call to Order

Chair Tom Hartman called the April 2, 2026, meeting of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (HRMPO) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to order at 2:00 p.m.

Minutes

Chair Hartman presented the minutes from the February 5, 2026, TAC meeting.

Mr. Dylan Nicely motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. James Polhamus. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

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

FY27-30 Transportation Improvement Program Release for Public Comment (TAC AF #26-04)

Mr. Zach Beard presented the draft Fiscal Year 2027-2030 (FY27-30) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and requested TAC recommendation that the Policy Board release the document for a 14-day public comment period. Mr. Beard explained that the TIP documents all highway and transit projects receiving federal transportation funding, requiring federal action, or designated as regionally significant. The current FY24-27 TIP expires September 30, 2026, and the FY27-30 TIP must be approved by May 31, 2026, to take effect October 1, 2026. Following approval, the TIP is incorporated into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and submitted to FHWA and FTA.

Mr. Beard noted that staff have revised the document format to address readability and version-control problems that developed under the prior structure, in which amendments accumulated within a single document over time. The FY27-30 TIP will be structured as three distinct components: a narrative document containing all required federal and state compliance language, and two standalone spreadsheet appendices for highway and transit projects. Each appendix will display only current project funding figures and be updated as amendments are approved, with prior versions archived on the HRMPO website.

Mr. Beard encouraged members to review the project tables distributed with the meeting mailout and contact MPO or VDOT staff with any corrections prior to publication, as amendments are substantially more burdensome to process after adoption. Mr. Beard noted that transit projects require more frequent amendment than highway projects due to year-to-year transit funding cycles, and that DRPT has moved to broader project category descriptions for this TIP cycle to reduce the frequency of routine amendments.

Ms. Libby Clark motioned to recommend that the Policy Board release the Draft FY27-30 Transportation Improvement Program for a 14-day public comment period; seconded by Mr. Jakob zumFelde. Motion carried unanimously.

Title VI Plan Update (TAC Memo #26-02)

Mr. Ms. Paula Melester provided an update on the CSPDC Title VI Plan and noted that the presentation fulfills the annual Title VI training requirement for TAC members. No TAC action was required.

Ms. Melester explained that Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in any program receiving federal financial assistance, and that MPOs are required to ensure broad public access to the planning process, engage traditionally underserved populations, and equitably distribute transportation benefits and burdens. VDOT conducts a triennial compliance review of each MPO's Title VI plan. The most recent HRMPO review was completed in January 2026. While the plan was not out of compliance during the review period, required corrections must be incorporated by April 24, 2026.

The required changes concern two rescinded Executive Orders. References to Executive Order 12898, including the term "environmental justice," and to Executive Order 13166, including the term "limited English proficiency," must be removed from the plan. Ms. Melester noted that national origin remains

protected under Title VI itself independent of the rescinded orders, and that the HRMPO's substantive practices will remain unchanged. At VDOT's direction, "limited English proficiency" is being reframed as "individuals with language access barriers." Staff are also expanding this definition to include individuals with sensory disabilities, including those who are hard of hearing or have vision impairments, and are consolidating the previously separate Title VI plans for HRMPO, SAWMPO, and the CSPDC rural transportation program into a single agency-wide plan covering the full CSPDC region, while maintaining program-specific demographic data and analysis for each area.

The HRMPO Policy Board approved release of the draft CSPDC Title VI Plan for a 14-day public comment period at the March 19, 2026, Board meeting. The comment period opened April 1 and closes April 15, 2026. The Policy Board will consider final approval at its April 16 meeting, followed consideration of CSPDC Board approval on April 20 and submission to VDOT.

FY27 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Update

Ms. Paula Melester and Mr. Garreth Bartholomew presented an overview of the Fiscal Year 2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). No TAC action was required.

Ms. Melester explained that the UPWP is a federally required annual work program outlining all MPO planning activities and how federal, state, and local funds will be used. Funding comes from PL planning funds from FHWA through VDOT and Section 5303 transit planning funds from FTA through DRPT, supplemented by prior-year carryover. A notable change for FY27 is an increased allocation of approximately \$68,000 for local assistance — nearly double the typical amount — reflecting a more intentional approach informed by one-on-one UPWP coordination meetings held with each member locality to identify specific projects where MPO assistance would be most valuable. Total annual MPO funding is approximately \$550,000.

Long Range Planning

Mr. Bartholomew described the planned activities by program area. For long-range planning, staff will kick off the 2055 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) in FY27, with a focus on supplementing rather than duplicating existing locality planning efforts. The 2050 Travel Demand Model (TDM) will be completed by the start of FY27, providing the foundational modeling tool for the LRTP. Long-range planning also includes continued support for the Bike the Valley regional multimodal connectivity program. For short-range planning, staff will maintain and administer the FY2027-2030 TIP and scope a small area study in Rockingham County, with additional details forthcoming.

Local Assistance

For local assistance, staff will work with the Town of Dayton on pedestrian and multimodal planning, building on a prior planning effort focused on the Town's historic alleyway network and connectivity to key community destinations. Staff will also work with the Town of Mt. Crawford on pedestrian and multimodal planning in support of a potential Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) application, and will develop a regional sidewalk and trail planning resource for all HRMPO member localities addressing requirements, cost implications, and funding strategies.

Ms. Melester noted that the expanded local assistance capacity reflects significant staff investment in training and new tools, including AI-assisted visualization, enabling more in-house delivery of planning services. She recognized Mr. Bartholomew's contributions in this area and noted Ms. Kayla Dixon's forthcoming role in supporting public engagement for the LRTP and other MPO work.

Transit

Regarding transit planning, most transit planning funds support HDPT's activities. Ms. Melester noted and Mr. Gatobu confirmed that HDPT's anticipated FY27 transit planning activities are primarily ongoing operational and compliance efforts. Ms. Melester noted that a technical assistance grant application was submitted to DRPT to fund development of a transit service plan for Rockingham County, building on recommendations from a prior feasibility study that identified potential for localized service and a demand-response model in the Bridgewater, Dayton, and Mt. Crawford area. If funded, with notification expected later in the fiscal year, the MPO would facilitate a consultant-led process to translate the feasibility study into current-dollar costs and implementable service models, with results needed before the next grant cycle opens in December.

SMART SCALE Round 7 Pre-application Update and North Mason Street Corridor Study Update

Mr. Garreth Bartholomew provided an update on HRMPO's SMART SCALE Round 7 pre-application submissions, with additional presentations by City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County staff on their respective applications. No TAC action was required.

Mr. Bartholomew noted that April 1, 2026, was the pre-application deadline. The CSPDC and HRMPO collectively submitted five pre-applications: recommendations from the VDOT STARS study on the Vine Street corridor; project pipeline recommendations for the Route 42/Virginia Avenue corridor; recommendations from the North Mason Street Corridor Study; a resubmission of the Port Republic Road Exit 245 recommendations re-entering the SMART SCALE cycle due to funding changes; and recommendations from the Port Republic Road/Peach Grove study. Mr. Bartholomew noted that the Vine Street and North Mason Street applications were submitted both by the MPO and by the City of Harrisonburg. Because MPO submissions are eligible only for the statewide High Priority Program (HPP) funding pool while City submissions are also eligible for district grant funding, double-submitting allows the City to pursue whichever pool proves more competitive. A decision on which submission to advance will be made before full applications are due.

Vine Street STARS Study

Mr. James Polhamus and Mr. Jakob zumFelde described the Vine Street STARS study corridor from US-11/North Main Street to Route 33/East Market Street. The preferred alternative includes a roundabout at Washington Street; continuous sidewalk on at least one side of Vine Street from North Main to East Market; two crosswalks with rectangular flashing beacons (RFBs) connecting to HDPT bus stops near Leslie Court and Meadowlark; and bike lane ramps at the Washington Street roundabout allowing cyclists to either remain in-lane or transition to a six-foot sidewalk facility around the roundabout. At Old Furnace Road, where a roundabout was considered but presented design challenges, the preferred treatment adds left-turn lanes, replaces signal infrastructure, and adds crosswalks connecting to existing sidewalk.

Route 42/Virginia Avenue Pipeline Study

Mr. Polhamus and Mr. zumFelde described the Virginia Avenue pipeline study corridor from King Street to the city-county line near Harmony Drive. Key improvements include left-turn lanes in both directions at 3rd Street; a short median at 5th Street functioning as a gateway treatment and sight distance improvement; reconfigured turn lanes at Mount Clinton Pike with a sidewalk gap fill to Common Good Marketplace; a median section near Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community (VMRC)/Acorn Drive as a gateway treatment; a sidewalk gap fill near Harmony Square Shopping Center; and approximately 900 feet of new sidewalk from Harmony Drive to Old Windmill Circle, completing a continuous sidewalk along the corridor. Reconfiguration of the Mount Clinton Pike intersection is being pursued separately ahead of SMART SCALE funding.

City of Harrisonburg North End Greenway

Mr. James Polhamus described the North End Greenway application, which proposes connecting the existing North End Greenway via pedestrian and shared-use path improvements along Chicago Avenue and along MLK Jr. Way and East Market Street. The improvements would create sidewalk along MLK Jr. Way over Reservoir Street and upgrade the East Market Street sidewalk to a shared-use path, improving access to the shared-use path being constructed in the median of East Market Street over the railroad and Interstate bridges as part of the ongoing bridge replacement project. Some improvements at Main Street are shared with the North Mason Street application and could be implemented independently if only one project is funded.

Rockingham County Applications

Mr. Dylan Nicely described the County's three SMART SCALE pre-applications: dual left-turn lanes at US-33 and Resort Drive, a recurring application that has been value-engineered to reduce costs over successive cycles; dual left-turn lanes at Stone Spring Road and Reservoir Road, an intersection with documented crash history supported by multiple traffic impact analyses (TIAs); and shoulder widening and intersection signage improvements on the Mayland Road (Route 259) corridor from a recently completed VDOT STARS study addressing road departure crashes.

North Mason Street Corridor Study

Mr. James Polhamus, with input from Mr. zumFelde, presented the draft preferred alternative for the North Mason Street Corridor Study developed with consultant VHB. The preferred alternative establishes one travel lane in each direction for most of the corridor with left-turn lanes at major intersections, new open space where feasible, and a shared-use path on the east side of North Mason Street for most of the corridor length. In the block between East Market Street and Elizabeth Street, a single northbound lane is maintained alongside the existing southbound lanes to accommodate constrained geometry, before transitioning to the standard cross-section north of Elizabeth Street.

At Gay Street, a roundabout is proposed which is larger than the temporary roundabout installed in summer 2025 and is sized to accommodate truck movements and to operate more efficiently than the existing signal. Funded bike lanes on Gay Street would connect into the shared-use path at the roundabout. At North Main Street, the existing traffic signal would be removed, with a reconfigured slip lane and crosswalk improvements. Signals at Wolfe Street and Elizabeth Street will be retained.

Additional elements include new sidewalk on the east side of North Mason Street between East Market and Elizabeth Streets, sidewalk reconstruction in the two blocks south of Wolfe Street, a bus shelter pad for the existing HDPT stop between Elizabeth and Wolfe Streets, and a short bike lane segment north of Wolfe Street connecting to the Federal Street shared-use path. The open house held prior to the pre-application deadline was well attended and allowed the study team to finalize intersection treatment decisions based on community feedback.

Agency Updates

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

Mr. Burgess Lindsey provided the following updates:

- I-81 Staunton widening project: Virginia State Police installed speed enforcement cameras in the work zone. Warning notices will be issued beginning April 3, 2026, for 30 days, with \$100 fines beginning May 2, 2026, near mile marker 224. Similar cameras are anticipated in the I-81 Harrisonburg widening corridor as that project advances.

Mr. Shane McCabe provided the following updates on behalf of Mr. Adam Campbell, who was not in attendance:

- SMART SCALE Round 7 pre-applications were due April 1, 2026. Full applications will open in approximately three months.
- The next Staunton District Spring Meeting is scheduled for April 28, 2026, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC).

Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)

Ms. Grace Stankus provided an update:

- The draft FY27 Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) is expected to be released on approximately April 14, 2026.
- The Virginia Breeze Tidewater Current route will launch April 20, 2026, connecting Harrisonburg to Virginia Beach along the I-64 corridor with intermediate stops. Tickets are available on the Virginia Breeze website.

City of Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation (HDPT)

Mr. Gerald Gatobu provided the following updates:

- HDPT recently completed installation of a new paratransit scheduling software system and is monitoring performance.
- HDPT is implementing a new Transit Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) system through Avail Technologies, with installation targeted for June–July 2026. The system will include a rider-facing app called MyStop; HDPT plans to coordinate with JMU ahead of the fall semester to promote the new app.
- HDPT is exploring extended evening service hours for city routes through August 2026, as well as increased frequency on select routes through an A/B bus approach piloted during spring break.

- HDPT is preparing for fall semester staffing, with driver recruitment and training underway.

Locality Updates

Rockingham County

Mr. Dylan Nicely reported no updates beyond the SMART SCALE applications discussed earlier.

City of Harrisonburg

Chair Hartman provided the following updates:

- University Boulevard construction is ongoing, with approximately eight months remaining.
- The Port Road projects including Bluestone Drive, and the signal at Bradley Drive are currently out for bid, with a contractor expected to be selected by May or June 2026. The project will involve approximately two years of construction activity on Port Republic Road.

Other Business

Ms. Melester announced that CSPDC is redoing its on-call consultant procurement. The current on-call bench remains in effect through the end of calendar year 2026, with the new solicitation anticipated this summer and new contracts beginning January 2027.

Ms. Melester introduced Ms. Kayla Dixon, who has served as a CSPDC graduate assistant from JMU while completing her Master of Public Administration degree. Ms. Dixon will join CSPDC full-time on July 1, 2026, as an outreach and public engagement planner, with time allocated to the HRMPO and a lead role in public engagement for the 2055 LRTP update.

Upcoming Meetings

Chair Hartman announced the following upcoming meetings:

- April 16, 2026 – HRMPO Policy Board Meeting, 3:00 p.m., Rockingham County Administration Center
- May 7, 2026 – HRMPO TAC Meeting, 2:00 p.m., Rockingham County Administration Center

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Zach Beard, Program Manager