

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board Minutes August 20, 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	✓	Alex Wilmer, Bridgewater	✓*	Garreth Bartholomew
✓	Gerald Gatobu		Robert Taylor, Mt. Crawford	✓	Zach Beard
	Nasser Alsaadun		Libby Clark, Mt. Crawford	✓	Kayla Dixon
	Ande Banks		Gary Corder, Dayton		
			Jeff Lineberry, VDOT		Others
	Rockingham County	✓	Adam Campbell, VDOT	✓*	Valerie Kramer, JMU
✓	Sallie Wolfe-Garrison	✓	Don Komara, VDOT	✓*	Gabriel Morey
	Casey Armstrong	✓	Jeff Nicely, VDOT		
	Town of Bridgewater				
	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 August 20, 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 June 18, 2026, Policy Board meeting.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Dany Fleming; seconded by Mr. Joel DeNunzio. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Chair Driver opened the floor for public comment. There was one public comment.

Mr. Gabriel Morey, representing a non-profit organization called Blue Ridge Rail, is petitioning the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) to include Harrisonburg and the Shenandoah Valley as future destinations in the 2026 Statewide Rail Plan. Blue Ridge Rail has a goal of submitting 500 signatures to DRPT by September 21 to demonstrate local support for passenger rail in the region. Mr. Morey said that the region has proven transit demand, future passenger rail would ease congestion, and rail could connect the Valley with other regions in the state. Mr. Morey noted that Blue Ridge Rail is “route-neutral,” and not interfering with the proposed Shenandoah Rail Trail from Broadway to Front Royal. Mr. Morey noted that he is working with Harrisonburg City Council member Laura Dent to write a letter of support and encouraged Board members to sign the petition or write their own letter of support. Mr. Morey thanked the Board for their time.

HRMPO FY24-27 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments (Board Action Form 26-14)

Mr. Zach Beard presented two FY24-27 TIP amendments for Board approval. Staff distributed a summary of the amendments to the Board and TAC on August 7 and released them for a seven-day public comment period from August 7 to August 14. No public comments were received.

Mr. Beard noted that the HRMPO and all other MPOs statewide remain on the FY24-27 TIP because four MPOs statewide currently lack CLRP that comply with FHWA timelines, preventing FHWA approval of the FY27-30 TIP and the statewide STIP until all MPOs are compliant. The new TIP's start date has consequently shifted from October 1, 2026, to April 2027.

The first amendment updates the City of Harrisonburg's Liberty Street RAISE grant project, which converts a US-11 driving lane to a two-way separated bike lane and adds a shared-use path along a segment of Main Street. FHWA directed the City to amend the TIP to reflect the project's updated total cost of \$14.3 million, with preliminary engineering and right-of-way costs programmed between FY25 and FY27.

The second amendment addresses the Construction: Transportation Alternatives grouping. Mr. Beard explained that VDOT organizes these projects into groupings subject to a sliding-scale cost threshold, and the HRMPO's Transportation Alternatives grouping has exceeded that threshold, requiring a formal amendment.

Ms. Sallie Wolfe-Garrison inquired about the origin and purpose of the Liberty Street RAISE project, noting she was not on the Policy Board when this project began and was unfamiliar with the project. Ms. Dent stated the purpose of the project is to provide more bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Downtown Harrisonburg.

A motion to approve the TIP amendments was made by Ms. Laura Dent; seconded by Mr. Joel DeNunzio. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Dent commented on arriving after the public comment period and noted her affiliation with Blue Ridge Rail. Ms. Dent explained that the organization is seeking 500 signatures in support of DPRT documenting a need for future Harrisonburg rail service in the Statewide Rail Plan.

FY27 Stone Spring Road and Ridgedale Road Transportation Master Plan Draft Scope of Work Overview (Board Memo #26-01)

Mr. Beard presented an overview of the draft scope of work for the new FY27 Stone Spring Road and Ridgedale Road Transportation Master Plan, a study MPO staff has scoped in coordination with Rockingham County, City of Harrisonburg, and district planning staff over the past several months. The draft scope was linked in the Board mailout; pending no additional comments, staff intend to procure a consultant by the end of the month and begin the study in September.

Mr. Beard explained that development pressure in the Stone Spring Urban Development Area (UDA) is outpacing transportation planning for the corridor. Several development proposals are active in the area, including informal discussions along the anticipated Peach Grove Avenue alignment. Mr. Beard noted that Rockingham County's UDA Plan, adopted in 2020 and updated with the County's 2024 Comprehensive Plan, establishes a 20-year land use vision but does not address functional classification, access management, intersection control, capacity analysis, or roadway alignments, leaving the County to review rezonings individually and produce inconsistent access outcomes on Stone Spring Road. He added that Ridgedale Road is not built for current traffic, and that a potential Peach Grove Avenue extension has never been formally studied.

The study's goals are:

- to establish a preferred transportation network for Stone Spring Road, Ridgedale Road, Greendale Road, and the Peach Grove Avenue corridor;
- evaluate a potential Peach Grove Avenue extension;
- and coordinate with the City of Harrisonburg on Ramblewood Road, the City's related Erickson Avenue Study, and bicycle-pedestrian connections.
- Incorporate the study's findings directly into its next County UDA Plan update to establish a consistent development standard for the area.

Mr. Beard reviewed the study's six-task scope: project management and coordination; data collection and existing conditions analysis; future conditions and growth forecasting under two buildout scenarios using the HRMPO Travel Demand Model; development of network alternatives, including access management recommendations, intersection control, and a Peach Grove Avenue alignment and cost analysis; a public engagement process including an online survey and targeted outreach to property owners on any proposed alignment; and a final consolidated Master Plan deliverable. Work on the study will take place September 2026 through May 2027.

Board discussion followed regarding the level of design detail for study area segments. Mr. DeNunzio asked about the level of detail along Ramblewood Road and how it relates to other study recommendations, and in general asked about the level of focus of each segment. Mr. Beard responded by explaining that each segment is context-drive, and has some varying levels of analysis, but that the purpose of the County with future development decisions. Ms. Wolfe-Garrison suggested analyzing the original projected traffic demand of Stone Spring Road to current data. Mr. Fleming commented that the study may also want to generally consider impacts along the Stone Spring Road segment in the City between Ramblewood Road and US 11 due to a high-volume of truck traffic near Interstate 81 (I-81).

Virtual Meeting Process Update

Ms. Paula Melester presented proposed changes to the Board's virtual and hybrid meeting process. Based on a review of peer MPO and public body practices, staff identified two concerns with the current process: ensuring meetings remain open and accessible to the public while protecting against cybersecurity risks, and improving staff's ability to moderate meetings, manage the chat, and control virtual participant audio and video without disrupting presenters.

Staff is moving future virtual and hybrid meetings to a Microsoft Teams webinar format. Meeting mail-outs will include a one-click registration link rather than a static recurring meeting link. Each meeting will have a unique link generated upon registration and sent via Outlook calendar invite. Registered attendees, whether they attend in person, attend virtually, or miss the meeting, will receive an automated email within one to two days after the meeting with the presentation slides and meeting recording, in advance of the minutes. In-person attendance remains the expectation for voting members to maintain quorum. Staff will send a reference guide to the Board before the change takes effect.

Agency Updates

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

Mr. Adam Campbell provided the following update:

- The Staunton District received 28 Smart Scale Round 7 applications totaling approximately \$342 million, including four applications from this area totaling approximately \$83 million. Submitted applications will be validated and scored through the remainder of 2026. The Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment will present a draft funding scenario to the CTB in January 2027, and the CTB will use project scores to inform selections for the FY28 Six-Year Improvement Program, to be adopted in June 2027.

Mr. Don Komara provided the following updates:

- Route 33 East Market Street Bridge and Multimodal Trail: The project is progressing toward completion this fall. The multi-use trail in the median is complete.
- Route 11 Sidewalk Project (Mount Clinton Pike to Trailer Park): Construction began several months ago. The sidewalk is located on the cemetery side of the road. A bridge widening at the south end of the project will accommodate the crossing.

- I-81 Staunton Widening (Exits 221–225): The project is approximately 60 to 65% complete and is expected to be completed in fall 2027. Speed enforcement cameras are active in the work zone and have contributed to improved driver behavior.
- I-81 Weyers Cave Widening: The project is about 55% complete. Crews have graded between the north and south travel lanes, and the corridor is starting to take shape.
- I-81 Harrisonburg Widening: Barrier installation is complete. The \$218 million contract covers six miles. The roundabout at Pleasant Valley Road and the Pleasant Valley Elementary School entrance are targeted for completion in May 2027. Speed limit through the Harrisonburg will be 55 mph, with speed cameras installed.
- Route 11 Near the Fairground: The Route 11 four-lane project past the fairgrounds went to bid in June. Construction is expected to begin in September 2026 and will pause during the 2027 fair before completing prior to the 2028 fair.
- Maintenance: Mowing, grading gravel roads, finishing rural rustic routes, and applying dust control continues, and VDOT is beginning to sign up staff for winter snow removal.

Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)

Ms. Grace Stankus provided the following updates:

- Ms. Lauren Breyer, a new DRPT transit planner, will become the DRPT representative for HRMPO. Ms. Stankus and Ms. Breyer plan to conduct an in-person handoff at an upcoming meeting.

Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation (HDPT)

Mr. Gerald Gatobu provided the following updates:

- Harrisonburg City Schools opened August 19 and JMU is opening August 26.
- HDPT is installing a new Intelligent Transportation System ahead of the JMU semester start, alongside a new rider-facing app that staff will market heavily to avoid confusion with the outgoing system.

Locality Updates

City of Harrisonburg

Mr. Dani Fleming provided the following updates:

- Mr. Fleming noted that the City and James Madison University (JMU) have been coordinating through ongoing committees and new working groups to align the university's strategic growth with city needs.

Rockingham County

Mr. Dylan Nicely provided the following update:

- Mr. Nicely thanked VDOT District Planning for SMART Scale planning assistance.

Town of Bridgewater

Mr. Alex Wilmer provided the following updates:



- Crosswalk Package: The Town is evaluating bids on a package of crosswalk improvements, including a lighted crossing at Generations Park on Main Street.
- Riverwalk Phase 3: The Town is preparing to bid Phase 3 of the Riverwalk project, extending from Edgebrier Park eastward behind Bridgewater College.
- A multi-use path connector through Oakdale Park around the new lake is expected to go to bid soon.

Town of Dayton

No updates were provided.

Town of Mt. Crawford

No updates were provided.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Upcoming Meetings

Chair Driver noted that the next TAC meeting is scheduled for September 3, 2026 The next Policy Board meeting is scheduled for September 17, 2026.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Driver adjourned the meeting at 4:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Paula Melester". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paula Melester, Director of Transportation
