



CONSTRAINED LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2035

*Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Approved - June 23, 2011*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The 23rd day of June, 2011

RESOLUTION

Endorsement of the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan 2035

WHEREAS, federal regulations implemented as a result of the Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) require urbanized area metropolitan planning organizations to develop and approve a financially constrained long range transportation plan; and

WHEREAS, the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan 2035 has been developed as a result of a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative (3-C) transportation planning process; and

WHEREAS, a major feature of the 3-C urban transportation planning process is the continuing observation and reappraisal of the urban transportation plan, and the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan 2035 will serve as the existing urban transportation plan, officially updating and replacing the Roanoke Valley Area 2025 Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan; and

WHEREAS, every effort has been made to prioritize projects which can be reasonably implemented within projected funding limits for the twenty-year horizon; and

WHEREAS, public input has been sought in developing the Plan through public meetings, in accordance with the Public Participation Policy and Procedure Manual approved by the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board on August 18, 2004.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board endorses the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan 2035 and the financially constrained program of projects contained within,

AND, THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this plan shall serve the Commonwealth of Virginia and the federal government as the primary guidance for future transportation related investments in the Roanoke Valley area.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David B. Trinkle".

David B. Trinkle
Chairman

Members: Bedford, Botetourt and Roanoke counties, cities of Roanoke and Salem, Town of Vinton, Greater Roanoke Transit Company, Roanoke Regional Airport Commission, Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, Virginia Department of Transportation

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INTRODUCTION

1

THE ROLE OF PLANNING

The concept of long-range planning can often be under-appreciated, especially in tight budgetary times. Conventional wisdom holds that any positive outcomes in public administration or society at large are the result of unseen natural processes or market forces. However, when a disaster arises, one of the first questions people ask is, “Why didn’t anyone *plan* for this?” In fact, it can be argued that planning is most necessary at times of scarce resources, because elected officials and other decision makers will need all the help and information they can get to make wise decisions with limited funds.

Ironically, many successful plans go without recognition because their consequences – clean air, uncongested traffic flow, grand public vistas, reliable storm water drainage, plenty of affordable housing, and urban estuaries teeming with wildlife – *appear natural or unplanned*. (emphasis added)¹

1. The Practice of Local Government Planning - Third Edition, 2000, p 4.

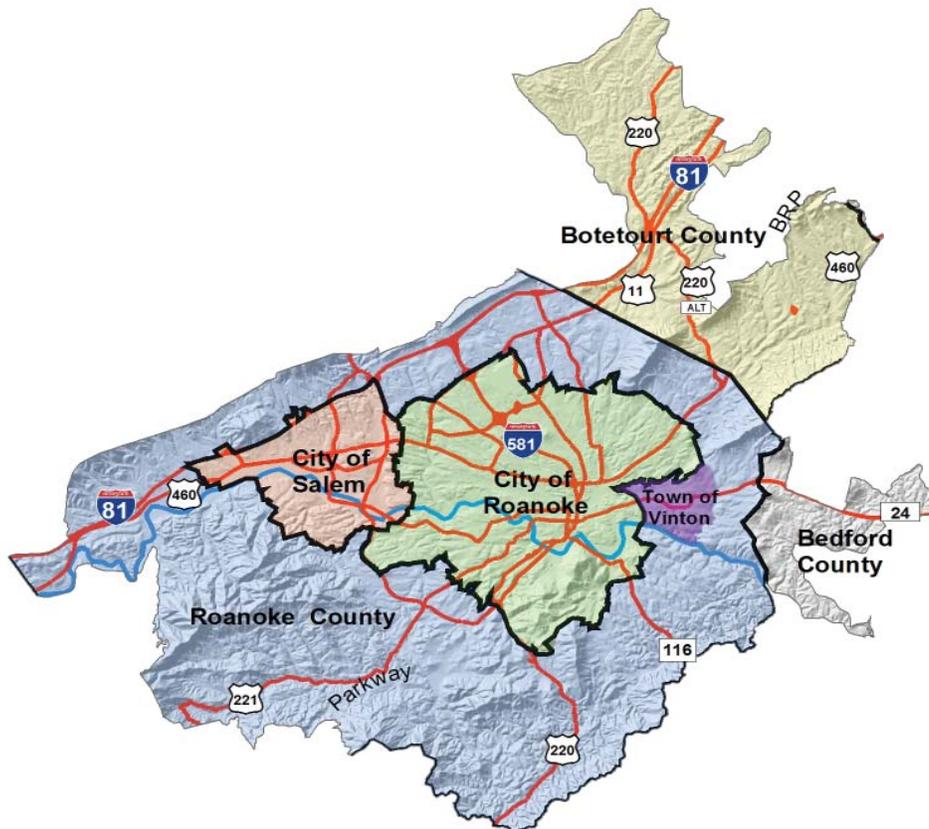
Federal legislation has defined a specific role for long-range urban transportation planning in Title 23, United States Code, Sec. 134 as reported in “Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users” or SAFETEA-LU.

SAFETEA-LU sets out the vision that: “It is in the national interest to... encourage and promote the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of surface transportation systems that will serve the mobility needs of people and freight and foster economic growth and development within and between States and urbanized areas, while minimizing transportation-related fuel consumption and air pollution....”

SAFETEA-LU further states: “To accomplish the[se] objectives, metropolitan planning organizations [MPOs]...in cooperation with the State and public transportation operators, shall develop long-range transportation plans...”^{2 i}

In practice, an MPO’s Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRTP) serves as the first step in a system of checks and balances to ensure that federal surface transportation funds are spent with buy-in from the federal, state, and local/regional levels of government. This check and balance is similar to what most people learned in their high school government classes concerning the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. However, the long-range transportation planning checks and balances unfold within the executive/administrative branch of government and are designed to ensure that local elected officials, acting through their respective MPOs, have a say in the expenditure of federal surface transportation funds within their Study Area Boundary. MPOs exercise this control by either including or not including funding for specific regional transportation projects in the CLRTP’s Financially Constrained List of Projects.

The 2035 Study Area Boundary for the Roanoke Valley Area MPO (RVAMPO) is depicted below:



2. Title 23, United States Code, Sec. 134 (a) & (c), as reported in “Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, Conference Report of the Committee of Conference on H.R. 3”

COMPLEMENTARY PLANNING PROCESSES

OTHER REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANS

There are other regional and multi-jurisdictional transportation planning processes that overlap in geography and scope with the RVAMPO long-range transportation planning process. Although these other regional transportation plans do not fulfill the check and balance function described previously, they often fulfill specific funding or grant requirements. Examples of regional long and medium range transportation plans and processes that complement or supplement the RVAMPO CL RTP 2035 process are listed below.

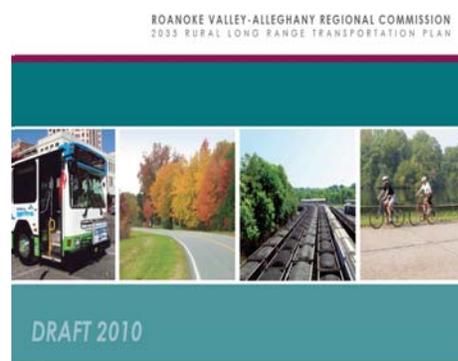
- Long-Range Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan
- Rural Long-Range Transportation Plans
- Regional Transit Development Plans
- Coordinated Human Service Mobility Plan

Long-Range Transportation Demand Management Plan: The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) has set up a requirement whereby all Rideshare and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) agencies in Virginia will develop a Long-Range TDM Plan. RIDE Solutions, the regional rideshare agency serving the Roanoke and New River Valleys, will develop the



TDM plan that covers both the RVAMPO and the nearby Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area MPO (BCMMPO). The TDM plan will have the same 2035 time horizon as this plan, and future updates will mirror the RVAMPO CL RTP update schedule. The RIDE Solutions TDM plan is scheduled to be completed in a similar time frame as the RVAMPO CL RTP 2035. Chapter 7 of this document will further detail TDM planning principles and program characteristics. Increasingly strained budgets at the federal, state, and local levels make TDM planning critical.

Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan: The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and a private sector consultant are partnering with the Planning District Commissions (PDCs) in Virginia to produce Rural Long-Range Transportation Plans. The plan for the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC) is expected to be completed between 6 to 12 months after the completion of RVAMPO CL RTP 2035. Nevertheless, chapter 16 of this document summarizes the rural planning process and progress at the time of completion of this document. It is expected that the rural planning process will inform financially constrained and vision list project candidates near the RVAMPO 2035 Study Area Boundary.



Regional Transit Development Plans: The Virginia DRPT has reinitiated the Transit Development Planning Process for Virginia’s fixed route and paratransit providers. Within the RVAMPO this process applies to both the fixed route provider Greater Roanoke Transit Company (Valley Metro) and the regional paratransit provider Unified Human Services Transportation Systems Inc. (RADAR). As of the writing of this plan, both providers are awaiting grant availability information for the development of their respective plans. These plans are expected to focus on public transportation operations and expansion possibilities.

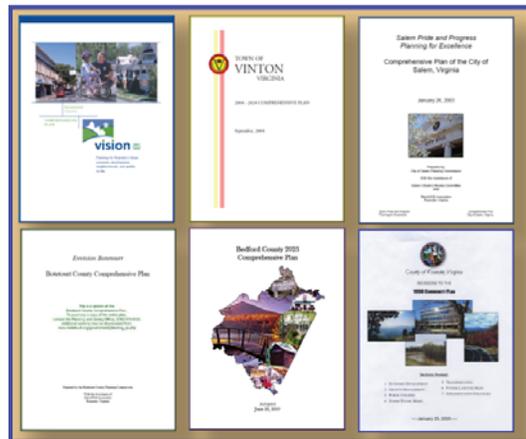


Coordinated Human Service Mobility Plan: The Coordinated Human Service Mobility (CHSM) Plan is prepared in response to the coordinated planning requirements of SAFETEA-LU as set forth in three sections of the Act: Section 5316, Job Access and Reverse Commute; Section 5317, New Freedom Program; and Section 5310, Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program. The CHSM establishes the construct for a comprehensive strategy for delivering transportation services to seniors, people with disabilities, and individuals of low income in the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission Planning District (PDC 5). Virginia Tech’s Center for Transportation Policy prepared a CHSM for PDCs 4 and 5, as well as the RVAMPO and BCMMPPO. In September 2008, Virginia DRPT and its consultants updated the CHSM plan for RVARC (PDC 5). Findings, analysis, and data from the most recent regional CHSM plan will be reflected throughout this document with special emphasis in chapter 6, “Scenario Planning.”



LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

In Virginia, local governments develop comprehensive plans as a general guide for future growth and related impacts within their jurisdictions. In general, transportation is but one area of specific focus in comprehensive plans. Other areas may include natural resources, water and wastewater facilities, parks and recreation, public safety, and future school needs. However, transportation directly or indirectly affects many of these other areas. In the RVAMPO long-range transportation planning process, comprehensive plans are generally used as a guide in project selection for either the Financially Constrained List of Projects (Chapter 11) or the Vision List of Projects (Chapter 15).



Projects that offer potential improvements but that are too costly to fit within current financial constraints are identified during the technical planning process, which uses a computerized “Travel Demand Model” (chapter 5). Comprehensive Plans, Neighborhood Plans, and other local government plans can be used to help decide which of these potential projects should go on the Vision List of Projects.

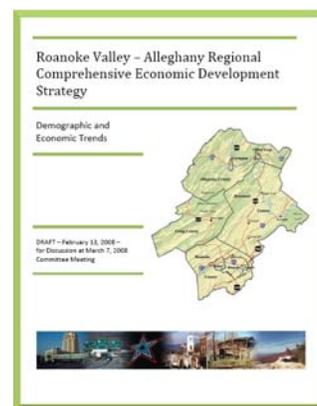
Some local governments develop more specialized plans that supplement comprehensive plans or are sometimes added to comprehensive plans through an amendment process. The City of Roanoke has a “Street Design Guidelines” document that has a direct impact on the RVAMPO long-range transportation planning process. “Street Design Guidelines” sets out standards for streets within the city based on neighborhood factors, the role of the street, and functional class. These additional standards will be incorporated into cost estimates for the City of Roanoke Urban System construction projects.



RVARC COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic road map to diversify and strengthen regional economies. A CEDS analyzes regional economies and serves as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, developing and implementing regional action plans, and identifying investment priorities and funding sources.

A CEDS, which integrates a region’s human and physical capital planning in the service of economic development, provides a flexible framework for adapting to global economic conditions and for fully utilizing a region’s unique advantages to maximize economic opportunity for its residents. A CEDS is a continuing economic development planning tool developed with broad-based and diverse public-and private-sector participation, which must set forth the goals and objectives necessary to solve economic development problems of the region and must clearly define metrics of success. Finally, a CEDS provides a useful benchmark by which a regional economy can evaluate opportunities to participate with other regions in the national economy.



Preparing a CEDS is a precondition for funding under most of the Economic Development Administration’s grant funding programs. This provides regions with an additional funding avenue for public infrastructure improvements that support regional economic development and alleviate economic development problems in a region.

LONG-RANGE PLANNING PROCESS

RVAMPO LONG-RANGE PLAN IN A NUTSHELL

A simplified concept of the RVAMPO CL RTP is as follows:

