

March 17, 2016

The March meeting of the Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Policy Board will be held as follows:

DATE: Thursday, March 24, 2016
TIME: 1:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission office
(Top Floor Conference Room), 313 Luck Ave., SW, Roanoke, VA

AGENDA

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, Introductions *Chair Johnson*
2. Approval of the February 25, 2016 Minutes, pp. 3-8 *Chair Johnson*
3. Chair's Report *Chair Johnson*
 - Overview of the March 2-3, 2016 TPO Federal Review Process
4. Allocation of Transportation Alternatives (TA) Funding *Bryan Hill*
 - Consideration of Supporting Resolution with Recommendation from the Transportation Technical Committee to the Policy Board, pp. 9-10
 - Four TA Project Applications --

Attachment #1	Sponsor: City of Roanoke Project: Colonial Avenue Boulevard Improvements TA Funds Requested: \$458,814
Attachments #2 & 2A	Sponsor: City of Salem Project: Downtown Salem Streetscape and Intersection Improvements TA Funds Requested: \$480,000

TPO POLICY BOARD: Cities of Roanoke and Salem; Counties of Bedford, Botetourt, Montgomery and Roanoke; Town of Vinton; Greater Roanoke Transit Company (*Valley Metro*); Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport; Virginia Department of Rail & Public Transportation; Virginia Department of Transportation

4. Allocation of TA Funding (Cont'd)

Attachment #3 Sponsor: Town of Vinton
Project: Glade Creek Greenway
TA Funds Requested: \$417,710

Attachment #4 Sponsor: Roanoke County
Project: Friendship Lane/Carvins Creek Bridge Replacement
TA Funds Requested: \$136,495

- 5. Approval of the Annual Obligations Report, p. 11 (Attachment #5) *Bryan Hill*
- 6. First Discussion of the Draft RSTP Policy and Procedures Guide *Mark McCaskill*
(Attachment #6)
- 7. First Discussion of the Draft FY'17 Unified Planning Work Program *Mark McCaskill*
(Attachment #7)
- 8. Other Business
- 9. Comment Period
- 10. Adjournment

Public Input Policy

“At the end of each Roanoke Valley TPO Policy Board meeting, the TPO Policy Board will allow for an open public forum/comment period. This comment period shall not exceed one-half hour in length and each speaker will be asked to sign up and be allowed a maximum of three (3) minutes to speak.”

ADA Compliance

The Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization intends to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and confirms that the office located at 313 Luck Avenue, SW, Roanoke, VA is ADA compliant. If you have a disability and wish to request assistance or a special accommodation, please inform Bryan Hill at 540-343-4417 or bhill@rvarc.org no later than 48 hours in advance of the posted meeting.

MINUTES

The February meeting of the Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization (RVTPO) Policy Board was held on Thursday, February 25, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission office, 313 Luck Avenue, SW, Roanoke, VA.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Doug Adams	Town of Vinton
George Assaid	Roanoke County
Bill Bestpitch	City of Roanoke
Todd Dodson	Botetourt County
Ray Ferris, <i>Vice Chair</i>	City of Roanoke
Jane Johnson, <i>Chair</i>	City of Salem
Ken King	Virginia Dept. of Transportation-Salem District
Diana Lewis (Alt. for Efren Gonzalez)	Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport
Billy Martin, Sr.	Botetourt County
Lee Osborne	Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission
Carl Palmer	Greater Roanoke Transit Company (Valley Metro)

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. A quorum was present. Chair Johnson welcomed George Assaid to the TPO Policy Board. Mr. Assaid is a new Roanoke County representative (replacing Charlotte Moore).

The following guests were in attendance: Michael Gray, VDOT-Salem District; David Holladay, Roanoke County, and Chairman, Transportation Technical Committee; and Allison Homer, intern with the Regional Commission.

2. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 28, 2016 MINUTES

The Minutes of the January 28, 2016 meeting of the Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization Policy Board were distributed earlier.

Roanoke Valley TPO Policy Board Action:

Upon motion by Mr. Ferris, seconded by Mr. Martin and carried, the Minutes of the January 28, 2016 meeting of the Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization Policy Board were approved, as distributed.

TPO POLICY BOARD: Cities of Roanoke and Salem; Counties of Bedford, Botetourt, Montgomery and Roanoke; Town of Vinton; Greater Roanoke Transit Company (*Valley Metro*); Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport; Virginia Department of Rail & Public Transportation; Virginia Department of Transportation

3. **REGIONAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (RSTP) POLICY AND PROCEDURES RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

Mark McCaskill stated staff is interested in updating the Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) Policy and Procedures Guide. The staff is asking the Policy Board to consider establishing a more regular schedule for RSTP updates. He reported that since the HB2 process will follow a two-year pattern, the TPO staff is suggesting establishing a two-year cycle for our RSTP as well. Three options for consideration include: Option One – countercyclical, meaning in years when HB2 is not accepting applications that would be the year for our RSTP applications; Option Two - cyclical with HB2; and Option Three - leaving things as they are. Mark stated that staff prefers the countercyclical option.

At the January TPO meeting, the Board asked for feedback from the TTC on several issues. Highlights from the TTC’s feedback included:

- **Countercyclical to HB2** – The TTC confirmed it is recommending a two-year RSTP application cycle that is countercyclical to the HB2 application cycle (this would mean that 2017 is the next year for requesting RSTP applications).
- **Re-compete or Keep the Same Cycle as HB2 (“Like HB2”)** – The TTC did not reach consensus on this topic and sought further guidance from the RVTPO Board.
- **Annual Adjustment Review** – The TTC recommends including an “Annual Adjustment” procedure where the TPO adjusts funding timing or other details based on any unforeseen delays or other events within particular projects.
- **Upper Limit on the Amount of Funding that Projects Can Receive (“Upper Limit Project Size”)** – The TTC did not reach consensus on this topic and sought further guidance from the RVTPO Board.

Mark McCaskill asked members how they wanted to proceed with the draft document after hearing comments from TTC and VDOT officials. Discussion ensued.

Concerning “Like HB2” vs. Re-compete, Mark explained that in the last two policy and procedures documents for RSTP, the TPO has had a re-compete framework. Meaning, every time you go out for applications, those projects in the six-year funding plan that have not started must re-compete with new RSTP applications. That has been the TPO process over the last two rounds and it has seemed to work. However, he noted that HB2 has since been introduced with the opposite philosophy. When HB2 projects are scored, projects are programmed and the cost for the projects are covered – no re-competing. Mark noted that the TTC found both pros and cons on the issue and did not reach a consensus. Michael Gray spoke about VDOT’s “full funding policy” approved by the CTB. VDOT is encouraging their TPO/MPOs, as part of their RSTP process, to do something similar to fully fund projects so no projects will be left with inadequate funding and little work done (i.e., money is there but not being used).

Mark stated if the Board goes with “Like HB2”, full funding would be “baked” into the philosophy. He noted that some members of the TTC liked the flexibility of the re-compete

offer. He further noted that if the TPO chooses re-compete and full funding, the only way he thought that could be done is that in each application round you would have to de-list or drop off all projects that have not started before the re-compete so as to avoid any full funding issues. Michael Gray offered a different approach and said one way to positively look at how it is being done now is that projects which are funded in the first year of the six years of RSTP funding, the Board is really committing to those projects. It is the projects in years 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, based off of what we have now, that will not have a funding commitment.

Ken King asked when a project is considered as having “started”. Mark responded either it has already received money or has received a letter to proceed from VDOT or VDRPT. A discussion then ensued. Ken King, Michael Gray, Lee Osborne and Bill Bestpitch each discussed various ways that a project could be considered to have “started” with the options ranging from actually starting on the ground in a physical way to getting a letter to proceed from the State. In the end, Michael Gray and Ken King offered a hybrid solution in which the first two years of a RSTP six-year funding plan will be deemed as having “started.” Projects in the remaining four years will have to re-compete with new RSTP applications. Michael Gray said he was going to speak with VDOT officials at the Central Office to see if this proposal to commit to the first two years of a six-year funding plan would meet that intent for “full funding”.

Ken King suggested that the TPO’s Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) continue to work on this issue noting that localities want to know their options. There are negatives to having projects fully funded when you are talking about adding a project. Six years from now is a long time from a local government’s perspective. VDOT is trying to get out of the business of partially funding projects that never come to fruition. However, he did see where Michael Gray’s earlier suggestion of committing to the first two years would allow for those committed projects to be fully funded in the VDOT SYIP, so that this may be a way to go forward with both flexibility and funding commitment.

Lee Osborne asked about projects that theoretically may never be fully funded, such as the Valley Metro bus replacement project. Noting that the issue is not going to go away so the question is does that fall under the issue of “Upper Limit Project Size”? Mark stated that was a good point, noting what we call a project is what was applied for -- not a grand vision of money wanted.

Mike Gray restated what he thought the TPO was asking the TTC, VDOT and TPO staff to examine more closely and bring back a recommendation to the next meeting. Once a project is started, the funding commitment will remain, but there is also a desire for flexibility to bring in new projects to re-compete, while keeping committed funds for projects. Mike Gray expressed that the TPO board needs to determine if they will stay committed to projects where the applicant may not be starting when they say they will -- do you keep funding projects when no work has started or do you make those projects re-compete?

Vice Chair Ferris stated whatever the structure; it should give the TPO Policy Board maximum flexibility to go forward. There was agreement by the TPO Board on this comment.

Bill Bestpitch inquired how much certainty do we have as an organization about how much funding is going to be available one or two years out. With things changing at the federal and state level, how are we to program money 2-5 years out when no one has committed they are going to give us that money.

Mark said it has been fairly consistent since these are federal funds so the only changes that occurred when SAFETEA-LU became MAP-21 and then the FAST Act. According to Mark, the availability of funds is only going to change when Congress passes a new transportation bill, usually every four to six years.

Mark talked about another option that is currently used by VDOT in its assessment of projects under HB2, which calls for assessing the “numerator/denominator” cost estimates associated with each project. Lee Osborne said he felt that would only favor small projects. Mark noted the other option is to say you want to have an upper limit. Instead of a dollar amount, since RSTP can change, you say our upper limit will be the equivalent of three years of RSTP funds or an equivalent of a certain amount of years.

Bill Bestpitch said the numerator/denominator can be used as one factor to look at projects to consider but not necessarily the deciding factor in every case.

Bill Bestpitch asked if the federal government requires that the policy and procedures guide be more definite than what was outlined above. Mark said it has to be a little more definite and will need to say how people are going to apply, be evaluated, how priorities are going to be arrived at, and how decisions are going to be made.

Ken King noted that the HB2 policy has a methodology of scoring with ultimate discretion still left to the board. The numerator/denominator, as a point of information for the board, is valuable. The guidance to an applicant that the board would prefer not to fund a project that exceeds two years of funding available to the board is good guidance, but it doesn't prevent action to the contrary. If the project has been funded in the first two years it is a committed project. This information will be useful in the dialogue among the TTC, VDOT and TPO staff, as well as informing the applicant they need to provide a scope, schedule and cash flow for the project. In this case, an upper limit “guidance” should be included as a strong suggestion but not as an absolute requirement. For instance, it could be very strongly suggested that projects not represent more than two years' worth of RSTP funding.

The TPO Policy Board outlined the following guidance points and asked the TTC to discuss these points at their March meeting and bring back recommendations to the Board. Vice Chair Ferris said it should be conveyed to the TTC that the TPO Board would like for them to come up with a draft document that embodies the guidance points.

- Localities will want a commitment that a project is funded in the first year or two (whether it is a letter to proceed or activity of project/Preliminary Engineering has begun).
- TPO Board wants maximum flexibility.
- Applicants need to show the cash flow of projects. This will illustrate the dependency a project may have that starts late. The Board should have the flexibility to respond as a part of an annual adjustment procedure.

- Establish an upper limit on funding (tying it to the number of years of funding). Language should be developed that makes this a very strong guidance but does not completely exclude an option for larger projects. The TPO Board suggested that two years of RSTP funding would be reasonable guidance to consider.

4. FY'17 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) CANDIDATE PROJECTS (DISCRETIONARY) SUMMARY

Mark McCaskill reported that a first discussion of the UPWP with narrative will be presented at the March TPO meeting. The goal is for the TPO Policy Board to approve the FY'17 UPWP at their April meeting. Lee Osborne asked how the update to the greenway plan would be handled. Mark stated the portion in the TPO urban boundary would be covered in the UPWP through urban transportation funding. The other non-transportation requests that the greenway commission would like will be handled through the Regional Commission's work program (local or regional section).

5. LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN PROCESS UPDATE

Mark McCaskill briefly reported that the staff's goal is to have the next long-range transportation plan completed by the end of summer 2016. It will consist of two separate end products for two separate audiences. There will be a 100+ page technical report version of the long-range plan, which is necessary for federal stakeholders reviewing our transportation process (i.e., performance measures, best practices, etc.). Once the long-range transportation plan has been adopted, the other document will be a citizen's guide which will show goals, issues, recommendations, etc. Both products will have to include a financially-constrained list, vision list and a HB2 strategy. Work on this document will conclude with an advertised public meeting.

6. FEDERAL REVIEW OVERVIEW

Mark McCaskill reported that the Roanoke Valley TPO will be undergoing an upcoming federal review/compliance process by a team from the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration on March 2-3, 2016. All Transportation Management Area Transportation Planning Organizations (TMA-TPOs) are required to have a review every four years. This will be the first for the Roanoke Valley TPO since becoming a TMA. As a part of the review, a public meeting will also be conducted by the federal review team on Wednesday, March 2, 2016 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at Campbell Court (Second Floor) in downtown Roanoke to receive comment and feedback from the public on the TPO planning process. Mark encouraged all TPO members to attend the public hearing if their schedules allowed.

7. TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES (TA) PROJECTS – FIRST REVIEW/ DISCUSSION

Bryan Hill noted that the TPO's Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) would be reviewing the four TA applications at their March 10 meeting. At that meeting, the TTC would make a recommendation for the allocation of \$247,602 in TA funds and forward that recommendation to the TPO Policy Board for consideration at their March 24 meeting. It should be noted that the TPO Policy Board has final say on the allocation of TA funds and

they can either accept the TTC's recommendation or change the allocation of TA funds as they see fit at their March meeting.

Sponsor: City of Roanoke
Project Name: Colonial Avenue Boulevard Improvements
TA Funds Requested: \$458,814

Sponsor: City of Salem
Project Name: Downtown Salem Streetscape and Intersection Improvements
TA Funds Requested: \$480,000

Sponsor: Town of Vinton
Project Name: Glade Creek Greenway
TA Funds Requested: \$417,710

Sponsor: Roanoke County
Project Name: Friendship Lane/Carvins Creek Bridge Replacement
TA Funds Requested: \$136,495

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Submitted by:

Wayne Strickland, Secretary,
Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization

The 24th day of March, 2016

RESOLUTION

SUBJ: Endorsement of Transportation Alternatives (TA) Grant Applications and Allocation of TA Funding

WHEREAS, the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program was created by the 2012 Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) by combining what had previously been known as the Transportation Enhancements (TE), Safe Routes to School and other programs into one category; and

WHEREAS, MAP-21 allows state departments of transportation to set aside a portion of their Surface Transportation Program allocation each year to be used for TA activities; and

WHEREAS, Virginia has chosen to set aside funds for TA activities; and

WHEREAS, these four grant applications applied for FY 2017 Transportation Alternatives funding:

Applicant: City of Roanoke
Project: Colonial Avenue Boulevard Improvements
TA Funds Requested: \$458,814

Applicant: City of Salem
Project: Downtown Salem Streetscape and Intersection Improvements
TA Funds Requested: \$480,000

Applicant: Town of Vinton
Project: Glade Creek Greenway
TA Funds Requested: \$417,710

Applicant: Roanoke County
Project: Friendship Lane/Carvins Creek Bridge Replacement
TA Funds Requested: \$136,495

WHEREAS, the Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization has \$247,602 in FY 2017 Transportation Alternatives funding to allocate between the four candidate applications; and

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WHEREAS, the TPO's Transportation Technical Committee has forwarded a recommendation to the TPO Policy Board to consider the allocation of \$247,602 in TA funds to the Colonial Avenue Boulevard Improvements application.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization Policy Board hereby endorses and awards the following TA funding allocations: \$247,602 to the Colonial Avenue Boulevard Improvements application, and forwards this decision to the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

Jane Johnson
Chair

STAFF REPORT

SUBJ: Federal Fiscal Year 2015 Annual Listing of Transportation Project Obligations

The RVTPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a listing of transportation projects over a three year period, which will be funded, at least in part, with funds from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and/or Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The current TIP covers the years 2015 through 2018 and lists the estimated cost for each phase of all projects. Project schedules often change as a result of personnel or consultant availability for design activities, or changes in budget resource availability. As a result, the TIP does not always provide an up-to-date picture of actual project expenditures. To ensure that the public will have an accurate understanding of how federal funds are actually being spent on transportation projects, Congress included a requirement that the organizations responsible for approving the Transportation Improvement Program publish an Annual Listing of Transportation Project Obligations.

A project obligation is the Federal government's legal commitment to pay the Federal share of a project's cost. An obligated project is one that has been authorized by the Federal agency and for which funds have been committed. Projects for which funds have been obligated are not necessarily initiated or completed during the program year, and the amount of the obligation will not necessarily equal the total cost of the project. For projects under the auspices of the FTA, obligation occurs when the FTA grant is awarded. For projects under the auspices of the FHWA, an obligation occurs when a project agreement is executed and the State/grantee requests that the funds be obligated.

An obligation removed from a project, or **released**, is usually the result of a decrease in the cost estimate, a project awarded for a lesser amount than originally authorized at advertisement, or an FHWA internal review.

Staff Recommendation:

Approval of the Federal Fiscal Year 2015 Annual Listing of Transportation Project Obligations.