



MINUTES

The March meeting of the Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization Policy Board was held on Thursday, March 24, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission office, 313 Luck Avenue, SW, Roanoke, VA.

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

Mickey Johnson	Bedford County
Steve Clinton	Botetourt County
Billy Martin, <i>Chair</i>	Botetourt County
Steve Fijalkowski	Montgomery County
Phil North, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Roanoke County
David Radford	Roanoke County
Renee Turk	City of Salem
Ken King	Virginia Dept. of Transportation – Salem District
Mike Stewart	Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport
Daniel Wagner	Va. Dept. of Rail and Public Transportation

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT

Stephanie Moon Reynolds	City of Roanoke
Keith Liles	Town of Vinton
Mike Stovall	Town of Vinton
Bill Jones	City of Salem
Kevin Price	Greater Roanoke Transit Company (Valley Metro)

TPO NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

Richard Caywood	Roanoke County
Lee Osborne	Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission
Mark Jamison	Transportation Technical Committee
Jon Lanford	Botetourt County

Others Present: Daniel Sonenklar, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation; Megan Cronise, Roanoke County; Anthony Ford, Virginia Department of Transportation; Michael Gray, Virginia Department of Transportation; Hong Liu, City of Roanoke; Dwayne D’Ardenne, City of Roanoke; Ian Coffey, City of Roanoke.

Staff Present: Bryan Hill, Jeremy Holmes, Cristina Finch, Rachel Ruhlen, Emma Howard-Woods, and Virginia Mullen.

1. WELCOME, CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair North called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

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

2. ROLL CALL (including consideration of remote participation)

Jeremy Holmes called the roll and stated a quorum is present.

3. ACTION REQUESTED: APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

The following consent agenda items were distributed earlier:

- A. March 24, 2022 RVTPO Meeting Agenda
- B. February 24, 2022 RVTPO Minutes

Motion: by Steve Fijalkowski for approval of the agenda, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mike Stewart.

RVTPO Policy Board Action: Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: by David Radford for approval of the February 24, 2022 RVTPO Minutes, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mike Stewart.

RVTPO Policy Board Action: Motion carried unanimously.

4. REMARKS BY THE CHAIR

- Vice Chair North reported that the U.S. Department of Transportation announced that \$2.9 billion is available for major infrastructure projects. The Multimodal Projects Discretionary Grant combines three programs under one Notice of Funding Opportunity. Two of the programs are new under the infrastructure law- \$300 million available under Rural and \$1 billion for the MEGA program. The third program INFRA (previously existing program) will receive \$1.55 billion. One Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant common application can be submitted to apply for one, two, or all three of the programs. The deadline is May 23, 2022.
- Mr. North introduced TPO's newest representative from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), Mr. Daniel Wagner. Mr. Wagner is a Statewide Transit Planner for DRPT, and while he is a native Richmonder he has family in the Roanoke Valley and is familiar with the area.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: ADJUSTMENT TO THE RVTPO FY23-28/29 SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT (STBG) FINANCIAL PLAN

A. Presentation on the RVTPO FY23-28/29 STBG Financial Plan

Cristina Finch and Rachel Ruhlen presented the draft FY23-28/29 Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Financial Plan. Eleven STBG candidate project applications were received in September 2021 and have been scored and prioritized per the RVTPO's STBG procedures. Five were recommended for STBG funding by the TTC and the other six may be considered in next year's adjustment cycle or they will have to re-compete in a future STBG

application cycle. The FY23-28/29 STBG Financial Plan (page 20 of the agenda packet) outlines the new candidate projects listed on the bottom of the page in red.

Mr. Lee Osborne asked if providing conditionally committed funds helps in the scoring process. Ms. Finch referenced the SMART SCALE Analysis shared previously with the Board and TTC members about the possible impact of conditionally committed funds. Mr. Richard Caywood added that the leverage will increase the overall mathematical score of the project because of reduction of the cost and no change in the benefit. However, it is unclear until hindsight whether the leverage was needed or beneficial. Mr. North commented that the analysis that was done by staff and shared with the TPO was very helpful.

Ms. Rachel Ruhlen presented the summary of the public input on the 2022 Roanoke Valley Transportation Investments: Surface Transportation Block Grant (pages 12 through 19 of the agenda packet). A majority of respondents supported or strongly supported all of the projects. Ms. Ruhlen pointed out that there were a lot of comments about prioritizing pedestrian and sidewalks projects, which might be a bit of a shift from greenways.

Mr. North asked if there is a certain medium of collecting information (newspaper, Facebook, etc.) that gave the most feedback. Ms. Ruhlen replied that the most response rate is through the email list (collected through surveys, Commission's website, Facebook ads, etc.).

B. Public Hearing

Vice Chair North opened the public comment period at 1:27 p.m. No comments were received. Vice Chair North closed the public comment period at 1:27 p.m.

C. Consideration of Resolution Approving the FY23-28/29 STBG Financial Plan

Motion: by Renee Turk to approve the presented resolution approving the FY23-28/29 STBG Financial Plan. The motion was seconded by Mickey Johnson.

RVTPO Policy Board Action: Roll Call Vote: Ayes - 9 (Johnson, Clinton, Fijalkowski, North, Radford, Turk, Stewart, Wagner, King); Nays - 0; Abstentions - 0. Motion carried unanimously.

6. REVIEW OF DRAFT FY23 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)

Cristina Finch reported that every year the RVTPO Policy Board approves a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to identify the transportation planning activities the RVTPO will undertake in the next fiscal year. The focus for next year is on the federally required and state-related items. The Regional Commission is revamping its work program process and will be utilizing the RVTPO's plans/studies/programs to guide the transportation work next fiscal year.

Ms. Finch went over the new planning emphasis areas from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), listed in the Draft FY23 UPWP (distributed as an attachment with the agenda packet). Those areas are:

1. Tackling the climate crisis- transitioning to a clean energy, resilient future
2. Equity and justice⁴⁰ in transportation planning.
3. Complete streets.

4. Public Involvement.
5. Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET)/U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) coordination.
6. Federal Land Management Agency (FLMA) coordination.
7. Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL).
8. Data in transportation planning.

Ms. Finch also highlighted some of the program activities listed in the FY23 UPWP and noted that the final draft will be presented for approval at the April TPO meeting.

Mr. David Radford asked if the "climate crisis" should be defined (same as the equity). Ms. Finch answered that she will contact the federal agencies and ask if there is a definition that can be included.

Mr. Clinton asked how the UPWP relates to the overall TPO work and how the specific and overall goals in the document are being tracked and monitored. Ms. Finch responded there are federal performance measures required to be tracked and also this information is being used to guide the transportation decision making. Ms. Finch noted that on the state level they are working with the same performance measures and a lot of the data, and the goals set by the TPO mimic what is set at the state level.

Mr. North noted that the work program is one of the federal requirements of the MPO but agrees that it is vague in some areas (like defining the "climate crisis") and asked how exactly it is measured to know if it is successful or not. Ms. Finch replied that staff will investigate and share the results at the next meeting.

Mr. Caywood commented that it would be helpful if staff could clarify which elements are requirements (necessary to continue to receive federal funding) and which are targets, recommendations, etc. Ms. Finch replied that there is no penalty for not meeting any of the federal performance measures, but the hope is that folks would strive to achieve those goals.

Mr. King commented that upon first read it may look like these are new issues, however they have always been requirements, it is just that now they have been emphasized and highlighted by executive order.

Chair Martin arrived at 1:50 p.m. and apologized for being late.

7. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE TRAFFIC CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Ms. Rachel Ruhlen reminded that a new Congestion Management Process (CMP) was adopted last year and added that the CMP requires annual review. This purpose of the review is to:

- Document the progress of each strategy, monitoring the effects of each strategy on traffic congestion.
- Justify changing, eliminating, or adding strategies.
- Showcase successes and identify missed opportunities.
- Assess the impact of strategies on traffic congestion and monitor regional traffic congestion trends.
- Review the balance of traffic congestion management strategies with other transportation goals.

Ms. Ruhlen reported that the attachment #2 "Congestion Management Process Implementation" (distributed with the agenda fulfills the requirement. No action is needed at this time.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Martin commented that after the last TPO meeting and the discussion about SMART SCALE, Mr. Lanford set up a meeting with VDOT. The meeting was greatly beneficial in understanding all different funding sources and how they work. Mr. Lanford thanked Mr. King and VDOT staff. Mr. King stated VDOT is willing to do the same for any locality that would like to do so.

Mr. King commented that VDOT staff had looked at the Commonwealth Transportation Board's policy and procedures regarding the small administrative funding adjustments and will be providing a draft to the staff and TTC that resembles as best as possible what the CTB has in place. Mr. Osborne commented that it has been about ten years since the TPO started making decisions about spending money, and it is natural that the processes and procedures are constantly evolving and require updates.

Mr. Holmes announced that RVARC's staff member Rachel Ruhlen will be moving to Colorado. Today's meeting is Rachel's last TPO meeting. Ms. Ruhlen has been a wonderful asset to the Commission for the past five years.

9. COMMENT PERIOD BY RVTPO POLICY BOARD MEMBER AND/OR PUBLIC

No comments were made.

10. ADJOURNMENT

No comments were made.

The meeting adjourned at 2:13 p.m.


Jeremy Holmes, Secretary
Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization