

MINUTES

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

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

Steve Clinton	Botetourt County
Billy Martin, <i>Chair</i>	Botetourt County
Steve Fijalkowski	Montgomery County
Phil North, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Roanoke County
Robert Jeffrey	City of Roanoke
Stephanie Moon Reynolds	City of Roanoke
Keith Liles	Town of Vinton
Mike Stovall	Town of Vinton
Renee Turk	City of Salem
Ken King	Virginia Dept. of Transportation – Salem District
Mike Stewart	Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport
Daniel Sonenklar (<i>remotely</i>)	Va. Dept. of Rail and Public Transportation

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT

Mickey Johnson	Bedford County
David Radford	Roanoke County
Bill Jones	City of Salem
Kevin Price	Greater Roanoke Transit Company (Valley Metro)

TPO NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

Richard Caywood	Roanoke County
Cody Sexton	Town of Vinton
Lee Osborne	Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission
Mark Jamison	City of Roanoke
Jon Lanford	Botetourt County

Others Present: Megan Cronise, Roanoke County; Anthony Ford, Virginia Department of Transportation; Michael Gray, Virginia Department of Transportation; Barbara Duerk, citizen.

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

1. WELCOME, CALL TO ORDER

Chair Martin 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. February 24, 2022 RVTPO Meeting Agenda
- B. January 27, 2022 RVTPO Minutes

Motion: by Stephanie Moon Reynolds for approval of Consent Agenda Item A & B, as presented. The motion was seconded by Keith Liles.

RVTPO Policy Board Action: Motion carried unanimously.

4. **REMARKS BY THE CHAIR**

- Chair Martin reported that the U.S. Department of Transportation recently opened applications to its RAISE grant program, formerly known as TIGER grants. The RAISE program is supported by the Infrastructure and Investment and Jobs Act, with \$1.5 billion available. RAISE is a flexible, competitive grant program which includes \$15 million dedicated to projects in Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Communities. The deadline to apply for a RAISE grant is April 14th, 2022. For questions or assistance with a RAISE application, members should contact TPO staff.

5. **ACTION REQUESTED: ADJUSTMENT TO THE RVTPO FY22-27 SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT (STBG) FINANCIAL PLAN**

A. Presentation on Adjustment to the RVTPO FY22-27 STBG Financial Plan

Cristina Finch reported the RVTPO Policy Board annually reviews currently funded STBG projects and accepts requests for additional funding in the Fall. Two requests (Tinker Creek Trail Extension and Orange Market Park and Ride/Parking Lot Improvements cost overruns) were submitted at that time. The Walnut Avenue project is a third request received last month which was granted a policy exception by the Board at the January RVTPO meeting allowing it to also be considered during this annual adjustment process. The Town of Vinton initially requested an additional \$370,000 in January and that amount has since increased to \$384,112. Ms. Finch went over the history of the funding of these projects provided in the staff report. She also noted the completion of the Roanoke River Greenway at Barnhardt Creek and the return of \$71,513 to the RVTPO.

Ms. Ruhlen noted that public input had been sought on these requests and talked about the survey results. Mr. Steve Clinton asked what triggered the survey. Ms. Finch replied that the survey is part of the collection of the public input. Mr. Lee Osborne commented that he thought the survey needed to include more information about the projects. Mayor Turk commented

that usually these types of surveys are brief because including too much information in the survey may deter citizens from completion.

Ms. Finch reported that the Transportation Technical Committee had reviewed the information and recommended funding two of the three requests: Tinker Creek Trail Extension and Walnut Avenue Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations (5th Street to City/Town limits).

B. Public Hearing

Chair Martin opened the public hearing at 1:19 p.m. No public input was received. Chair Martin closed the public hearing at 1:19 p.m.

C. Consideration of Resolution Approving Adjustment #3 to the FY22-27 STBG Financial Plan

Motion: by Mike Stovall to approve the presented resolution to adjust the FY22-27 STBG Financial Plan approving the requests to cover cost overruns for two existing STBG-funded projects and accepting the return of funds from completion of the Roanoke River Greenway Bridge across Barnhardt Creek. Motion was seconded by Phil North.

RVTPO Policy Board Action: Motion carried unanimously.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: RECOMMENDATION ON FY23-24 TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVE SET-ASIDE PROGRAM ALLOCATIONS

Mr. Bryan Hill presented the TA information previously distributed with the agenda packet and explained that the RVTPO Policy Board will have a preliminary amount of \$715,036 in FY23 and FY24 to allocate to TA projects (potential adoption, 2/24/22). The current project TA requests total \$981,000.

Mr. Hill also informed the Board that staff had coordinated with Salem District VDOT staff and CTB Member Dr. Raymond Smoot on recommended TA allocations. As a result of those conversations, staff recommended the following scenario for consideration by the Board as the RVTPO TA allocation:

Locality	Project	Total Project Cost	TA Amount Requested	CTB Member Recommended Allocations	TPO Allocations
City of Roanoke	Williamson Road Pedestrian Improvements	\$575,000	\$460,000	\$0	\$460,000

Roanoke County	Glade Creek Greenway Vinyard Park West	\$651,375	\$521,000	\$266,064	\$255,036
	TOTALS	\$1,226,375	\$981,000	\$266,064	\$715,036

Mr. Hill stated that this recommended scenario is contingent upon the assumption that the Policy Board will fund the Town of Vinton’s Glade Creek Greenway Phase 3 PE project (from Washington Avenue/Pollard Street via North Pollard Street to Vinyard Park) via the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding program which VDOT has said would indicate a connection and make Roanoke County’s TA request eligible to receive the funding. The Glade Creek Greenway Vinyard Park West project may not be eligible for TA funds if built on its own and does not connect to anything.

Motion: by Stephanie Moon Reynolds to approve the Resolution, approving funding for the FY23 and FY24 Transportation Alternatives Projects, as presented. The motion was seconded by Robert Jeffrey.

RVTPO Policy Board Action: Motion carried unanimously.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: SELECTION OF FY24 SMART SCALE RVTPO CANDIDATE PROJECTS TO PURSUE

Mr. Bryan Hill noted that at the January meeting, staff briefed the Policy Board on the process of submitting and selecting RVTPO candidate project applications for the FY24 round of SMART SCALE. The process entailed each locality or modal stakeholder requesting the RVTPO to apply on its behalf for a SMART SCALE project to complete and submit the *Candidate Project Request Form for RVTPO SMART SCALE Applications*. The RVTPO has a maximum of four applications it can submit in August 2022 but may initiate five pre-applications in March.

Staff developed a simple and straightforward prioritization and scoring process for the requests, to recommend to the RVTPO Policy Board up to five project applications to initiate in March with four ultimately being submitted in August 2022. The staff report, on page 63 of the agenda packet, listed the top ranked RVTPO project requests. Those five projects, listed in the table below, were recommended by staff and the TTC.

Recommended Projects to Pursue in SMART SCALE Round 5 in Priority Order

Rank	Place	Score	Agency	Project Name
1	1	45	Roanoke Co.	West Main Street Phase 3 Sidewalk

2	1	45	Roanoke Co.	Pedestrian Crossing Improvements on Route 419 and at Plantation/ Hershberger Intersections (UPC 117212)
3	2	40	Roanoke Co.	Pedestrian Improvements on Williamson Road (Plymouth Drive to Dent Road/Clubhouse Drive)
4	3	35	City of Roanoke	Orange Ave and Williamson Rd. Intersection Improvements
5	4	30	Roanoke Co.	Route 419 Intersections/Projects (one or more) between Bower Road and Apperson Drive

Mr. Clinton asked what the next steps would be. Mr. Hill replied that the pre-application window will open on March 1st, projects will be entered into the SMART portal, by or before April 1st. At that time, the pre-application window closes, and the top four projects will move onto the full application phase. Mr. Clinton asked staff to provide a briefing on the SMART SCALE process at a future meeting. Mr. King explained that when the SMART SCALE pre-application process was first instituted, there were no restrictions on the number of pre-applications; however, the process had changed since.

Motion: by Phil North the selection of FY24 SMART SCALE RVTP0 candidate projects as presented and illustrated in the table above. The motion was seconded by Mayor Turk.

RVTP0 Policy Board Action: Motion carried unanimously.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Holmes commented that most members are probably aware of the tragic event on Route 11 where bicyclist Tabitha Thompson was struck and killed. The RVTP0 and possibly the whole RVARC are looking to develop a regional response (educational campaign, message, or some other form). Staff is currently working with Visit Virginia Blue Ridge and VDOT on ideas.

9. COMMENT PERIOD BY RVTP0 POLICY BOARD MEMBER AND/OR PUBLIC

Citizen Barbara Duerk expressed a willingness to speak. Ms. Duerk commented that she had been involved with alternative transportation of walking and bicycling for a long time. She was in contact with delegate Austin about possible funding for the Craig Valley Scenic Trail. Ms. Duerk recalls the Regional Commission being involved in the past with numerous projects and studies in that regard. Ms. Duerk said she learned that the senate version of the budget includes \$233 million in funding for multi-use trails, \$50 million for trails office and \$207 million that is unspoken for and will be left up for decision making. Ms. Duerk asked members for their support for PE for the Valley to Valley Trail, and for other trails in the area. She pleaded that the RVTP0 will ask our representatives in the general assembly to support the \$233 million that is being funded for multi-use trails, including the Craig Valley Scenic Trail.

Mr. North asked Mr. Holmes to write a letter of support. Mr. Ken King advised that the letter of support advocates for endorsement of making investments in the program and should highlight what types of benefits it will bring.

Mr. North also commented that the grocery tax bill will impact every locality in the room. Part of the grocery tax money goes to transportation. Mr. North said that according to what delegate Austin said transportation may not be as impacted because of all the other funding streams this year. Mr. North asked members to look at the VACO note that was sent out earlier to find out more about the impact from the tax bill. He asked if anyone would like to get a copy of the note to reach out to him.

The meeting adjourned at 1:57 p.m.



Jeremy Holmes, Secretary
Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization