



MINUTES

The March meeting of the Transportation Technical Committee was held on Thursday, March 10, 2022 at 1:30 p.m. at the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, 313 Luck Avenue, SW, Roanoke, VA.

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

David Givens	County of Botetourt
Jonathan McCoy	County of Botetourt
Megan Cronise	County of Roanoke
Will Crawford	County of Roanoke
Wayne Leftwich	City of Roanoke
Mark Jamison, <i>Chair (via zoom)</i>	City of Roanoke
Anita McMillan	Town of Vinton
Cody Sexton, <i>Vice Chair (via zoom)</i>	Town of Vinton
William Long	Greater Roanoke Transit Company
Frank Maguire	Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission
Michael Gray	Virginia Dept. of Transportation - Salem District
Daniel Sonenklar <i>(via zoom)</i>	Virginia Dept. of Rail and Public Transportation

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT

Mariel Fowler	County of Bedford
Dan Brugh	County of Montgomery
Crystal Williams	City of Salem
Nathan Sanford	Unified Human Serv. Transp. System (RADAR)

NON-VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT

Kevin Jones	Federal Highway Administration
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RVARC Staff Present: Cristina Finch, Bryan Hill, Rachel Ruhlen, Andrea Garland, Emma Howard-Wood, Jeremy Holmes (via zoom) and Virginia Mullen.

Others Present: Ian Coffey, City of Roanoke.

1. WELCOME, CALL TO ORDER

Secretary Cristina Finch called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL (including consideration of remote participation)

Cristina Finch, Secretary to the TTC, called the roll and stated a quorum was present.

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

Secretary Finch reported that Mark Jamison, representing the City of Roanoke, and Cody Sexton, representing the Town of Vinton, have requested to participate remotely in today's meeting of the Transportation Technical Committee, under the RVTPO's policy for electronic meeting participation, allowing for remote participation under special circumstances and a physical quorum is present. The reasons for remote participation are due to personal matters: Mark Jamison is on vacation (participating remotely from Todd, North Carolina) and Cody Sexton is traveling with a friend to Alabama, participating from his vehicle en route. Secretary Finch asked if there were any objections. None were voiced. The two requests were approved by unanimous consent.

3. **ACTION REQUESTED: APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

The following consent agenda items were distributed earlier:

- A. March 10, 2022 RVTPO Meeting Agenda
- B. February 10, 2022 TTC Minutes

The following corrections to the February 10, 2022 TTC Minutes were suggested:

Anita McMillan suggested the following correction on page 8 of the agenda:

"Also, ~~at~~ it was mentioned earlier last month the Town of Vinton made a request to the Policy Board for an exception to the policy (Policy #7) which the Board granted and approved the public input be ~~south~~ sought on the \$370,000 request. Since then, Vinton's request has increased to \$384,112."

Megan Cronise suggested the following correction on page 1 of the agenda:

*"**RVARC Staff Present:** Cristina Finch, Bryan Hill, Rachel Ruhlen, ~~Jefe~~ Jeremy Holmes, Andrea Garland, and Virginia Mullen.*

***Others Present:** David Jackson, Cambridge Systematics; ~~Antony~~ Anthony Ford, Virginia Department of Transportation; Grace Stankus, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation. "*

Frank Maguire suggested the following correction on page 6 of the agenda:

***"Motion:** by Frank ~~McGuire~~ Maguire to approve the TA Funding scenario, as presented; seconded by Megan Cronise."*

Motion: by Wayne Leftwich to approve items (A) and (B), under the consent agenda, as amended; seconded by Anita McMillan.

TTC Action: Motion carried unanimously.

4. **CHAIR REMARKS**

- Chair Jamison reported that at the Policy Board approved, at their February meeting, an adjustment to the STBG FY22-27 Financial Plan, the TA allocations, and the pursuit of SMART SCALE funding for 5 project applications. Both were recommended by the TTC.

- Chair Jamison reported that there are new federal grant opportunities available as a result of the new Infrastructure Law. \$1.5B in RAISE grants are available and applications are due April 14. Also, \$8.7M in Virginia Federal Lands Access Programs (FLAP) funding is available with requests for project funding due on May 2. There is no match requirement for FLAP, and this relates mainly to accessing the AT and Blue Ridge Parkway in our region. Anyone that would like more information should contact RVARC staff.

5. **CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROANOKE VALLEY TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

Cristina Finch reported that David Jackson from Cambridge Systematics was unable to join today's meeting and provided an update on the plan's progress. Since the February TTC meeting, the RVTP team has revised the common transportation solutions to address TTC feedback (as provided indicated in the staff report) and conducted initial analysis reviewing needs compared to programmed projects as a means to assess "addressed" and "gap" needs.

If a RVTP need overlaps completely, partially, or is within a specified distance of a FY 2022-2027 Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) project and/or a RVTPO TIP project, the need will be evaluated as an addressed need. If a RVTP need does not overlap any programmed project, then it is considered a gap need.

It is possible that a project in a nearby location (for example on the same corridor upstream or downstream from the need location) may also address a need. The RVTP team will complete this analysis and align the gap needs with the results of the priority needs process to identify a subset of gap needs within each jurisdiction to then identify solutions. The results will be shared with each member jurisdiction in order to review the results and reach decisions on a set of priority gap needs after which the team will develop solutions for each priority gap need.

Mr. Sexton asked if the consultant is doing the analysis in sort of the opposite way- is the team working on identifying solutions for the projects that are currently funded? Cristina replied yes, they are looking into what tools are used to address needs of the currently funded projects. Mr. Sexton commented that it would be helpful to know for an existing project that is moving forward what the solutions look like in real time. Ms. Finch replied that this perspective can be added.

Michael Gray asked if there will be a discussion on how to take the gap needs, looking at the solutions and come up with a prioritized list of needs to address. Cristina Finch explained that the gap needs have a priority order based on the needs prioritization. From that list, staff will coordinate with localities to identify which needs to review for solutions recognizing that the new process will allow for continuous review of needs and not all gap needs will have an identified solution this year.

Will Crawford asked if once the needs are prioritized and linked with solutions, will the next step be to work on prioritizing the solutions? Ms. Finch answered with yes.

6. **ACTION REQUESTED: RECOMMENDATION ON DRAFT FY23-28/29 SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT (STBG) FINANCIAL PLAN**

Cristina Finch reported that the RVTPO Policy Board annually reviews the need for adjustments to its existing STBG project allocations and every other year considers requests for new projects. The Board approved an adjustment to existing project allocations last month and this month will consider funding new projects. The candidate projects have been scored and prioritized by the TTC and the public has provided feedback on the draft investments. The draft FY23-28/29 STBG Financial Plan was distributed with the agenda packet. Ms. Finch noted that the updated FY28 amounts have not yet been received. The TTC is asked to review the draft financial plan and make a recommendation to the Policy Board.

Cody Sexton asked if the updated FY28 numbers from VDOT are received prior to the March RVTPO meeting will the TPO have the ability to make additional changes to the Financial Plan to add and/or move around projects. Ms. Finch replied that the first proposal would be for the Orange Ave. (U.S. 460) - 11th to 24th Street Improvement Project that has a request for conditional \$5 million (right now the plan can only accommodate \$4.4 million). Any money beyond that would be placed in a balance entry or could be given to the other potential investments listed on page 19 of the agenda packet.

Motion: by Cody Sexton to recommend to the Policy Board the FY23-28/29 STBG Financial Plan, as presented with the provision that if any additional funds become available would go to Orange Ave. (U.S. 460) -11th to 24th Street Improvement Project (up to \$5 million- currently the plan can only accommodate \$4.4 million) and the rest would be placed in balance entry and the Policy Board would discuss allocating the balance entry at their meeting; seconded by Megan Cronise.

TTC Action: Roll call vote - Ayes 11 (Givens, McCoy, Cronise, Crawford, Leftwich, Jamison, McMillan, Sexton, Long, Maguire, Gray); Nays 0; and Abstentions 0. Motion carried unanimously.

7. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE TRAFFIC CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS**

The Traffic Congestion Management Process adopted by the RVTPO in 2020 states that the RVARC will produce an annual Traffic Congestion Management Process. Rachel Ruhlen reviewed attachment #1, "Congestion Management Process Implementation", distributed with the agenda packet, which fulfills this requirement, and asked members to provide comments.

Megan Cronise provided a number of notations of progress that were not reflected in the report. Michael Gray suggested putting a note about COVID-19 pandemic on the charts and graphs in the document. Jonathan McCoy asked why off-peak traffic congestion is higher than peak. Ms. Ruhlen replied that the threshold for off-peak congestion is lower than the threshold for peak congestion. Chair Jamison commented that if members have other questions and/or comments they can send them directly to Ms. Ruhlen.

8. **REVIEW OF DRAFT UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM**

Ms. Finch stated 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 transportation work next fiscal year. The Draft FY23 UPWP was distributed with the agenda packet. The Regional Commission's budgeting process is currently underway, and dollar amounts will be added to the final draft that will be shared in April. The TTC will be asked to make a recommendation to the RVTPO Policy Board at their April meeting.

Megan Cronise asked to find out more about the "Development of TA Procedures", listed under new activity on page 12 of the FY23 UPWP. Ms. Finch explained that there is a very good system in place for the STBG program, but not for the TA program. The goal is to have a communication (system) in place that would review the status of TA-funded projects, check if there is any money coming back, and how the money is going to be distributed. Michael Gray commented that it would be best if the procedures are simple and easy to follow.

Mr. Gray added that if one is not familiar with the federal regulations (things that are required versus things that are suggested), it may be a bit confusing to follow the FY23 UPWP document. He further explained a lot of the activities around FAST ACT are required but not necessarily spelled out how to go about them and the planning considerations on page 7 are more suggestions. Mr. Gray suggested adding a context to them would help members understand better. Ms. Finch proceeded to describe each of the new planning emphasis areas and how they applied to the region.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

10. COMMENTS BY MEMBERS AND / OR CITIZENS

Michael Gray made the following four announcements:

- SMART SCALE Round 5 pre-application period would close on April 1, 2022.
- Spring CTB meeting will be held on Thursday, May 12, 2022 at 4 p.m. at the Holiday Inn - Valley View.
- There are HSIP training webinars on March 29th and March 31st.
- The email sent from OIPI on March 9th has a lot of information about the ongoing gap study, data, mapping and more. Mr. Gray would be happy to forward the email to members that have not received it and would like to look at it.

Megan Cronise handed out a flier with meeting dates for Roanoke County's 200 Plan. Ms. Cronise noted that there is a community meeting tonight at 4 p.m. at the South County library.

Cristina Finch announced that RVARC's staff member Rachel Ruhlen will be moving to Colorado. Today's meeting is Rachel's last TTC meeting. Ms. Ruhlen has been a wonderful asset to the Commission for almost five years.

Chair Jamison thanked Rachel for her work for the Commission and the localities. Rachel's passion and energy for bicycle and pedestrian improvements are outstanding, and she will certainly be missed.

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cristina D. Finch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Cristina D. Finch, AICP, LEED AP, Secretary,
Transportation Technical Committee