

***Blacksburg/Christiansburg/Montgomery Area  
Metropolitan Planning Organization  
755 Roanoke Street  
Christiansburg, VA 24073***

**Minutes**

November 6, 2008

PRESENT: Steve Mouras - Virginia Tech  
Debbie Swetnam - Blacksburg Transit  
Richard Ballengee - Town of Christiansburg  
Lance Terpenney - Town of Christiansburg  
Ron Rordam - Town of Blacksburg (arrived during meeting)  
Leslie Hagar-Smith - Town of Blacksburg  
Richard Caywood - VDOT (Salem)  
Adele Schirmer - Town of Blacksburg  
Doug Marrs - Montgomery County  
Clay Goodman - Montgomery County  
Michael St. Jean - VT Montgomery Regional Airport Authority  
Dan Brugh - BCMC MPO  
Randal Gwinn - Recording Secretary

ABSENT: Rebecca Martin - Blacksburg Transit  
David Clarke - VDOT (Christiansburg)  
Tammye Davis - Federal Highway Administration  
Charles Badger - Department of Rail and Public Transportation  
Tony Cho - Federal Transit Administration

NON MPO PRESENT:

Anne McClung - Town of Blacksburg  
Karen Drake - Town of Blacksburg  
Michael Russell - VDOT (Salem)  
Leo Rutledge - VDOT (Richmond)  
David Clarke - VDOT (Christiansburg)  
Steve Sandy - Montgomery County  
Kevin Byrd - Montgomery County

**I. DECLARATION OF A QUORUM AND CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Lance Terpenney declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 11:10 AM.

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chairman Terpenney asked that everyone check to insure that they had a copy of the amended agenda.

On a motion by Adele Schirmer, seconded by Richard Ballengee, and carried unanimously, the agenda was approved.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 26, 2008 MEETING**

On a motion by Adele Schirmer, seconded by Richard Ballengee and carried unanimously, the minutes of the June 26, 2008 meeting were approved.

**IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS**

There being no speakers, the public address session was closed.

**V. OLD BUSINESS**

None

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

**Approval of On Call Consultant Contract for the MPO**

Dan Brugh advised that the current On Call contracts with Parsons Transportation Group and Hayes, Seay, Mattern, and Mattern have expired and that the Policy Board authorized advertisement for On Call planning services at its meeting on March 6, 2008. Montgomery County advertised for these services and the TAC has reviewed the submitted proposals and recommended executing one contract with Parsons Transportation Group.

On a motion by Adele Schirmer, seconded by Leslie Hagar-Smith and carried unanimously,

WHEREAS, the MPO requested Montgomery County to prepare a Request for Proposal on behalf of the MPO for on call planning services, and

WHEREAS, Four proposals were received, and

WHEREAS, a review committee of the TAC has reviewed the proposals and recommends executing a contract with Parsons Transportation Group, and

WHEREAS, the TAC concurs with this recommendation and recommends this to the Policy Board.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the BCM-MPO authorizes and requests Montgomery County to execute this contract on behalf of the MPO.

**Authorization for Chairman to approve purchase order for On Call Consultant to develop the 2035 Long Range Plan Update**

Dan Brugh advised that the MPO Long Range Plan needs to be updated by 2010 to be in compliance with SAFETEA-LU. VDOT will be doing the traffic modeling portion of the Plan development for our MPO as well as others across the state. The MPO consultant will be doing the preliminary work as well as completing the Plan. In order to work with VDOT's schedule, the MPO needs to start preliminary work as soon as possible. Authorization for the Chairman to approve a purchase order for this study is requested. He further advised that the MPO 2008-09 UPWP has \$40,000 allocated to begin work on this update and that prior approval of the scope of work and budget will be secured from VDOT and FhWA.

On a motion by Richard Ballengee, seconded by Adele Schirmer and carried unanimously,

WHEREAS, Federal legislation, SAFETEA-LU, requires the MPOs to update the Long Range Plan every 5 years and keep at least a 20 year horizon, and

WHEREAS, this update will be done by a consultant for the MPO with VDoT performing the traffic modeling, and

WHEREAS, preliminary work needs to be done by the consultant before VDoT can perform the traffic modeling, and

WHEREAS, this preliminary work needs to be done soon in order to work with VDot's schedule, and

WHEREAS, our On Call Contract has this update listed as a potential study project.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Montgomery Area MPO authorizes its Chairman to negotiate with Parsons Transportation Group to perform this update and authorize a purchase order for this study.

FUTHER, that approval of a scope of work and budget for the study project be approved by VDoT and FHWA prior to authorization.

AND FUTHER, that the cost not exceed \$140,000 spread over 3 fiscal years (FY08-09, FY09-10, and FY10-11).

## **Support for Enhancement Project in the Town of Blacksburg**

Karen Drake advised that the Town of Blacksburg has secured Enhancement funding previously for preliminary development of the College Avenue Promenade. The Town desires to submit a request to fund construction engineering documents in Phase II of the project and requests the MPO support of the proposal. The TAC reviewed this request and recommended support of the Town of Blacksburg request.

Dan Brugh stated that there is also a request by the Town of Christiansburg through Montgomery County for the Huckleberry Trail Extension, bringing the number of enhancement requests submitted to two. The Montgomery County request was initially submitted last year with MPO support and no additional action is required from the MPO. He further advised that it is possible to have multiple enhancements funded.

Steve Mouras commented that Virginia Tech also supported continuing the enhancement.

On a motion by Adele Schirmer, seconded by Leslie Hagar-Smith and carried unanimously,

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Commonwealth Transportation Board construction allocation procedures, local Metropolitan Planning Organization endorsement is required in order that the Virginia Department of Transportation program a Transportation Enhancement project in the Town of Blacksburg;

WHEREAS, downtown Blacksburg is home to many of the major civic functions of the community, including local government services, the U.S. Post Office, the Farmer's Market, the Lyric Theater, many of the Town's oldest religious institutions, a collection of one-of-a-kind retail offerings and restaurants, and public outdoor spaces;

WHEREAS, downtown is a major interface between the Virginia Tech campus and the Blacksburg community;

WHEREAS, the College Avenue Promenade project will help promote and enhance the National Register's Blacksburg Historic District and the Town's local Blacksburg Historic District;

WHEREAS, the College Avenue Promenade is recommended by Blacksburg 2046, the Town's Comprehensive Plan and the 2001 Downtown Master Plan;

WHEREAS, the College Avenue Promenade project will provide a substantially improved pedestrian corridor linking Virginia Tech with Downtown Blacksburg and will create a safe, pleasant downtown public gathering space;

WHEREAS, the College Avenue Promenade will enhance the downtown's urban environment and compliment its historic architecture;

WHEREAS, the Town of Blacksburg has been awarded funding for Phase I design of the College Avenue Promenade through the Transportation Enhancement Program;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization requests the Commonwealth Transportation Board to fund the continuation of the College Avenue Promenade Transportation Enhancement Project.

### **Approval of the Coordinated Human Services Mobility Plan**

Dan Brugh advised that federal legislation, SAFETEA-LU, requires that all MPOs have a Coordinated Human Services Mobility Plan. However, the legislation did not specify who was to prepare it. The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) took the lead and prepared all of the plans for the rural and small urban areas with the input of affected localities. This plan was developed by VDRPT and their consultant with the input of the NRVPCD, MPO staff, and local service providers. The developed Plan covers the entire Planning District of which the MPO is a part. He further advised that any localities that wanted to implement any of the proposals identified and/or take advantage of any funding must first be a part of an approved plan.

On a motion by Richard Caywood, seconded by Richard Ballengee and carried unanimously,

WHEREAS, Federal legislation, SAFETEA-LU, requires development of a Coordinated Human Services Mobility Plan for all MPOs, and

WHEREAS, The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, with the input of localities and local service providers, has developed a plan for The New River Valley Planning District (PDC4), and

WHEREAS, The MPO is part of The New River Valley Planning District,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization accepts the Coordinated Human Services Mobility Plan for The New River Valley Planning District (PDC4) dated June 2008 and approves it as the plan for the MPO.

### **Support for Safe Routes to School Grant for the Town of Blacksburg**

Adele Schirmer advised that VDOT administers a program designed to enhance safety around schools and encourage children to walk or bike to school. The Town of Blacksburg would like to pursue two grants from this program for Gilbert Linkous Elementary School and the Blacksburg New School. She further advised that this is a pilot program may be expanded to other schools within Montgomery County.

On a motion by Richard Caywood, seconded by Leslie Hager-Smith and carried unanimously,

WHEREAS, VDoT Administers grant funding for the Safe Routes to School Program, and

WHEREAS, this program is intended to provide options that allow children to walk and bicycle to school safely, and

WHEREAS, The town of Blacksburg desires to pursue funding of \$100,000 to support education, encouragement, enforcement, and \$500,000 to support engineering solutions including sidewalk and trail construction along with signage and traffic calming for Gilbert Linkous Elementary School and the Blacksburg New School.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the BCM-MPO supports the Town of Blacksburg's request and encourages VDoT to fund this program in Blacksburg

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **SmartWay Bus Update**

Dan Brugh advised that ridership has increased dramatically with an increase of 57% in ridership this September over September of 2007. He further advised that a schedule needs to be developed for the replacement of buses since they are approaching their useful service life.

### **Transit Planning Update**

Debbie Swetnam stated that the Christiansburg SmartWay Survey has been circulated and thus far has had a large response (10% with more than 1000 surveys returned). Debbie also advised that a SmartWay passenger survey financed by the MPO is being conducted by VA Tech to gather demographic data. In addition, there have been discussions with Radford University and Radford City concerning service to their area will probably result in a survey being conducted in Radford. She further advised that BT would like to spend approximately \$1800 to do a project in Blacksburg concerning needed work on sidewalks, bus stops, routes, and other logistics when funding becomes available.

Steve Mouras asked that a list of proposed studies be prepared so that it would be easier to keep up with what studies are underway and those proposed.

Richard Caywood spoke about lack of adequate parking at the Park and Ride lots causing loss of riders on the SmartWay buses and the need to look more closely at what could be done to address this issue. Dan Brugh asked where funding for these facilities came from to which Richard replied that current funding comes for the maintenance budget but it may be time to look at different ways to provide funding.

### **Other Items**

None

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Adele Schirmer advised that the Town and others would be meeting later in the day with VA Tech and VDOT representatives to discuss options for moving forward with plans for the Southgate / Route 460 Bypass interchange. Steve Mouras added that this project has a consideration for a long time and that there is interest in getting this project moving forward again. Michael St Jean added that the VA Tech Montgomery Executive Airport is being constrained by the VA Tech dairy barn. Steve answered by saying that the VA Tech land use study suggested that moving the VA Tech agricultural elements to another location would be a solution to issues common to both airport expansion and the interchange project.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled meeting is December 4, 2008.

**RECESS**

The meeting recessed at 12:10 pm for lunch with the Roanoke MPO.

## RECONVENE

Following lunch, Lance Terpenny, Chairman of the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery MPO, welcomed the Roanoke Valley Area MPO members and staff to the New River Valley. Chairman Terpenny reconvened the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery MPO and Chairman Trinkle called the joint meeting to order at 1:15 p.m. A quorum was present for the Roanoke Valley Area and the Blacksburg/Christiansburg/Montgomery Area MPO Policy Boards. Additional attendees that joined the meeting were:

Efren Gonzalez ( <i>for Jackie Shuck</i> )	Roanoke Regional Airport Commission
Jane Johnson	City of Salem
Billy Martin, Sr.	Botetourt County
Lee Osborne	Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission
Melinda Payne	City of Salem
Ron Smith	Botetourt County
David Trinkle, <i>Chairman</i>	City of Roanoke
Wayne Strickland	Roanoke Valley Area MPO Secretary
Mark McCaskill	Roanoke Valley Area MPO Staff
Jake Gilmer	Roanoke Valley Area MPO Staff
Jeremy Holmes	RIDE Solutions
Sherry Wallace	Roanoke Regional Airport Commission
Dana Martin	Commonwealth Transportation Board

### 1. UPDATE ON CURRENT & FUTURE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Dana Martin, Member of the Commonwealth Transportation Board, updated members on what can be expected concerning transportation funding for the State. Highlights from his presentation included:

- VDOT funding decision is expected to be made some time in December for the upcoming Six-Year Improvement Program.
- Logical to predict federal support for transportation to go down, as revenue projections are at an all-time low.
- Federal Highway Trust Fund will be a major issue.
- Car sales are at 2004 level.
- Gas prices will continue to fluctuate
- Must start trying new approaches to funding and focus on smaller-scale projects.
- Need to protect the allocation formula as it is currently structured.

## **2. RECENT TRENDS OF THE ROANOKE REGIONAL AIRPORT**

Sherry Wallace, Marketing Director for the Roanoke Regional Airport, presented the following highlights:

- 700,000 passenger trips from the airport in 2007. That number is expected to be down 10% in 2008.
- The Roanoke Regional Airport ranks 144 out of 450 airports in country.
- Currently, there are 5 non-stop carriers serving the airport.
- Virginia Tech is the number one business user of the airport, followed by GE, Norfolk Southern and MeadWestvaco.
- 60% of the passengers are flying for business purposes.
- The airport's number one destination is Chicago, with Orlando as #2.
- The airport's security project will soon be completed, which includes new sidewalk and brick planters that will reduce the impact from a potential explosive blast.

## **3. SMARTWAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE**

Dan Brugh, Executive Director of the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery MPO, updated members on the SmartWay Advisory Committee and distributed information on the Smartway bus ridership.

- SmartWay Advisory Committee members include two representatives from both the New River Valley and Roanoke Valley, and representatives from Valley Metro and Blacksburg Transit.
- Ridership on the SmartWay bus has expanded greatly in the last year mirroring increases in the cost of gasoline. Staff projects that ridership will stay around current level.
- Valley Metro will soon need to purchase replacement SmartWay buses as the existing ones reach the end of their life cycle.
- Will start additional 7:20AM SmartWay service beginning in January 2009 as a trial run.
- Richard Caywood commented that improvements are needed at the I-81 Exit 140 and Rocky Mount park-n-ride lots.

#### **4. RIDESHARE & TRAFFIC DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM) UPDATE**

Jeremy Holmes, Program Director of RIDE Solutions, the regional rideshare program covering the Roanoke and New River Valleys,

- Long Range TDM Plan – all Virginia TDM agencies, coordinate with other MPO plans
- Rideshare database doubled when gas prices rose. There are currently 725 in the database.
- RIDE Solutions website has approximately 1,400 visitors per month and 5000 page users.
- 45% of rideshare database has destinations in the New River Valley
- RIDE Solutions is shifting its focus towards enlisting employers
- Transportation Demand Management Plan: 20-year including (1) plan to respond quickly to gas prices, (2) expansion in Region 2000, (3) new market segments, and (4) integrate into VTRANS 2035.
- Currently there are 725 people in the ridesharing database.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.