

**Hampton Roads Transportation
Accountability Commission (HRTAC)
Summary Minutes of the February 19, 2015 Regular Meeting**

The Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission (HRTAC) Regular Meeting was called to order at 12:40 PM in the Regional Board Room, 723 Woodlake Drive, Chesapeake, Virginia, with the following in attendance:

HRTAC Voting Members in Attendance:

Alan Krasnoff, Chair	Raystine Johnson-Ashburn
Rex Alphin	Linda Johnson
Clyde Haulman	McKinley Price
Michael Hipple	Tom Shepperd

HRTAC Ex-Officio Members in Attendance:

Cathie France (Alternative)*
Charlie Kilpatrick
John Malbon
Jennifer Mitchell

HRTPO Interim Executive Director:

Camelia Ravanbakht

Other Participants:

Deputy Secretary Grindly Johnson
James Utterback
Tom Inglima

HRTAC Voting Members Absent:

Paul Fraim	William Sessoms
Eugene Hunt	Senator Frank Wagner**
Delegate Johnny Joannou**	George Wallace
Delegate Chris Jones**	Kenneth Wright
Dallas Jones	Delegate David Yancey**
Senator Louise Lucas**	

HRTAC Ex-Officio Members Absent:

John Reinhart

* Denotes Late Arrival or Early Departure

** Absent due to the 2015 General Assembly Session

Others Recorded Attending:

Ellis W. James, Frank Papcin, Donna Sayegh (Citizens); James Baker, Andrew Fox, Earl Sorey (CH); Randy Martin (FR); Mary Bunting, Brian DeProfio (HA); Jamie Oliver (IW); Bryan Hill (JC); Joe Howell, Jeffrey Raliski (NO); Bryan Stilley (NN); Randy Wheeler (PQ); Selena Cuffee-Glenn (SU); Jim Spore (VB); Jack Tuttle (WM); J. Mark Carter (YK); Doug Martin (Army Corps of Engineers); Hollis Ellis (CAE, Inc.); John Herzke (Clark Nexsen); J. Ryan Murphy, Elias O'Neal (Daily Press); Scott Forehand, Don Quisenberry, (eScribeSolutions); Bert Ramsay (Lane Construction); Dave Thompson (Michael Baker International); Karen McPherson (McPherson Consulting); Rhonda Murray (Navy Region Mid-Atlantic); Deborah Brown, Michelle Martin, Ronaldo T. Nicholson (Parsons Brinckerhoff); Joey Funaro (SunTrust); Dianna Howard (TLP, VBTA, VBTP); Robert K. Dean (Tidewater Libertarian Party); Angel Deem, Tony Gibson, Caleb Parks, Scott Smizik, Heather Williams (VDOT); David Forster (Virginian-Pilot); Amber Randolph (Willcox & Savage); Kelli Alredge, Melton Boyer, Nancy Collins, Randy Keaton, Mike Long, Chris Vaigneur (HRPDC); Robert Case, Kathlene Grauberger, Danetta Jankosky, Theresa Jones, Mike Kimbrel, James McNamara, John Mihaly, Brian Miller, Kendall Miller, Joe Paulus, Seth Schipinski, Dale Stith (HRTPO)

Public Comment Period (*limit 5 minutes per individual*)

Mr. Ellis James spoke about the revision of the Route 460 project by VDOT that was recently published in his local paper. He expressed concern for the “mom and pop” businesses that would be impacted by the limited access project now represented by the 12-mile stretch discussed in the Route 460 revision. He expressed hopes that input from those affected businesses and individuals would be considered. He closed by making a point that he hopes the Commission will provide “very close scrutiny” regarding negotiations especially where remuneration and developers are concerned, referencing recent contracts entered into by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Ms. Dianna Howard commented that transportation has been an issue for a long time in Hampton Roads. She commented that the State has given most of the money available for transportation issues to Northern Virginia. She identified the local transportation issues as being I-264 through the tunnels, I-64 through the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel and NOB. She expressed dismay that the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel issue hasn't been addressed, and won't be under consideration until 2040. She noted that she recently heard at a CTAC meeting that the Port was no longer going to fund construction of the Craney Island Connection, and she felt that funding for that project should come from somewhere other than solely from the taxpayers of Hampton Roads. She then noted concerns over the amount of debt that was going to have to be issued to cover the projects, and she closed with comments regarding the Attorney General's recent opinion regarding conflicts of interest and voting quorum rules. She questioned how the Attorney General came up with the position, which she interpreted as not abiding by the law.

Mr. Frank Papcin began his comments by holding up a flyer regarding the organization of HRTAC. He read a passage from the flyer explaining the purpose of HRTAC. He then gave a synopsis of the projects being considered by HRTAC. He noted that the greatest amount of congestion in this area is the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, and nothing was being considered or planned for that. He noted that the increased congestion at the high rise bridge and other bridge crossings is caused by the commuter avoidance of tolls at the Portsmouth Tunnels. He cautioned that it wasn't the doing of just Governor McDonnell.

He stated that the 460 project was necessary, especially in light of being a potential evacuation route for natural disaster. He also stated this to be a necessary project as a local economic engine supporting moving cargo from ports. He noted that the Third Crossing was designed for moving of cargo as well, but his perspective was that it will simply move congestion from one point to another. He closed by saying that the greatest priority of the Commission should be to reduce the hours and hours of delay experienced by commuters.

Ms. Donna Sayegh questioned whether the comments made by the public, including those made by herself, are being heard by the Commission. She expressed concern that she and others like her may be wasting their time. She noted that Bob Brown had previously come and shown HRTAC a design on how to improve congestion. She asked how he could be heard and used. She stated that government was a force, and a system that functioned to get a job done. She noted a concern that the Port has an agreement with Portsmouth quoted as being "Payment in lieu of taxes." She explained that she didn't think Portsmouth was getting all the money that they were supposed to get, and further that the amount of welfare and need in general in Portsmouth was great. She closed by again wondering if the public's voices are heard and if HRTAC is using the citizens' voices to help make the region better.

Minutes of the January 8, 2015 HRTAC Regular Meeting

Chair Krasnoff stated that since there were not enough voting members present to approve the Minutes from the January 8, 2015 HRTAC Regular Meeting, that approval would be deferred until the next regular meeting scheduled for March 19, 2015 since a quorum was not met for today's meeting. The next meeting date was confirmed by Mr. Tom Inglima.

Briefing on the I-64/High Rise Bridge Corridor Study Environmental Assessment: VDOT

Chair Krasnoff noted that this was for discussion purposes only. VDOT Commissioner Charlie Kilpatrick gave a brief introduction recognizing that Ms. Angel Deem, VDOT Environmental Division Administrator, was present and that they were here to brief HRTAC on the status of the Environmental Assessment on the High Rise Bridge Corridor project.

Mr. Scott Smizik, a Project Manager from VDOT, began his presentation describing the area encompassed by the study as being in Chesapeake from the I-64/I-264 interchange to the I-64/I-464 interchange. Additionally, he gave a starting date of the study as July 1, 2013 per guidance from the 2013 Budget Bill. He referenced that the public had access to the information and the opportunity to comment, not only directly to VDOT at public hearings that were held, but also in response to a Preliminary Public Notice issued by the U.S. Coast Guard. He also recounted that the HRTPO and CTB had both received briefings previously. He noted that the CTB, initially briefed in January, requested that HRTAC be briefed before they take any action.

Key components of Mr. Smizik's presentation included a reference to a grading scale for the level of service, rated as letter grades from A to F. In addition, he spoke about different build alternatives known as No Build, CBA-1, and CBA-2. He specifically noted that both CBA-1 and CBA-2 can accommodate bridge heights of 95-135 feet. He also specifically noted that currently the study area is rated as having a "D" level of service, with an "E" or "F" rating over the bridge itself.

Chair Krasnoff noted that there are some new people on the Commission and that the new members, some of the old members, and some audience members may not be familiar with the acronyms and level of service grades being discussed. To that end, Chairman Krasnoff requested that Mr. Smizik give greater explanation during his presentation of some of those items.

Mr. Smizik continued and explained that CBA-1, otherwise known as the "Build Eight Alternative", would have 8 lanes in total noting 4 lanes in each direction. He stated that the project would deliver a level of service grade C, which is one letter grade better than the current level of service, and multiple letter grades better than the level of service projected in 2040.

Mr. Smizik next described CBA-2, otherwise known as the "Build Eight Managed Alternative". As in CBA-1, CBA-2 includes the construction of two additional lanes of capacity in each direction. CBA-2 however, allows for multimodal options as well as toll and passenger management. He noted that CBA-2 does not commit to or imply tolling. Either further analysis and decision making would be used to determine what management options should be applied in the future, or it can be accompanied by a specific management option to direct future planning. He continued to explain that the Environmental Assessment includes three separate management scenarios which are:

- An HOV (High Occupancy Vehicle) scenario that includes dedicating one lane in each direction to HOV use, which forecasting suggests free-flowing traffic in the HOV lanes and the general purpose lanes would function at level of service D, or similar to what's experienced today.

- A HOT (High Occupancy Toll) scenario would have all new capacity operate as HOT lanes, with an estimated service level increase of 2 letter grades to a “B” as compared to current service level. The general purpose lanes would then function at an estimated level “E”. The HOT scenario includes a wider footprint than the other scenarios.
- An All Tolled scenario where both existing and new capacity would be tolled. A projected level of service grade “C” is expected throughout the corridor. A 20-30 percent decrease in traffic is expected due to toll avoidance.

Mr. Smizik discussed bridge heights of 95 and 135 feet, noting that the 135 foot version would cost an estimated \$200 Million more than the 95 foot height. He noted preference for CBA-1 from the general public via feedback and comments obtained at public hearings. He noted support for the 95 foot bridge height from the City of Chesapeake via a City Council resolution. The City of Chesapeake passed a second resolution supporting CBA-1 and reiterating support for the 95 foot bridge height. He also spoke of an ongoing Army Corps of Engineers navigation study regarding channel depth. He specifically mentioned the cooperation between the US Coast Guard and VDOT and the continued cooperation allowing for identification of a preliminary bridge height for permitting and design.

Mr. Smizik closed his presentation by noting that it was his understanding that HRTAC and HRTPO would consider the alternatives at their respective March meetings and endorse a preferred alternative. He said the next step in the process would be to return to the CTB in April for identification of the preferred alternative, and then VDOT would prepare a revised EA. Mr. Smizik said at that point, VDOT and HRTPO would have to commit funding to allow VDOT to request a NEPA decision and complete the NEPA process.

Mr. Charlie Kilpatrick spoke and gave clarification to some of the acronyms and terms being used in Mr. Smizik’s presentation. He gave greater explanation of the CBA-1 and CBA-2 models, defined HOV and HOT acronyms explaining the meanings of both “High Occupancy Vehicle” and “High Occupancy Toll”, and gave the I-95 express lanes in Northern Virginia as an example of the use of HOT lanes.

Mr. Rex Alphin asked if the level of service through the corridor was “E” currently. Mr. Smizik replied that the level of service was “D” with an “E” and “F” rating over the bridge. Mr. Alphin then asked how many public comments had been received for this project, to which Mr. Smizik replied 30 or 40 comments had been received. Mr. Kilpatrick noted that the amount of response received was low compared to the amount of traffic flow in the corridor. Mr. Alphin then asked how well the HOT lanes were working in the Northern Virginia region. Mr. Kilpatrick stated that the project was only completed very recently, and that the lanes had only been open about a month. He said that the additional capacity was working and they can see a general improvement.

Mr. Tom Shepperd asked if VDOT was looking for comment from the Commission, or presenting options to the Commission that VDOT had determined to be the most reasonable. Mr. Kilpatrick stated that these were the options available that presented a reasonable level of service through the design year. Mr. Shepperd then asked if all of the project options were 8 lanes, and Mr. Kilpatrick confirmed that they are. Mr. Shepperd asked if the options presented were chosen because they cover the largest potential project. Mr. Kilpatrick responded that no matter what, an 8 lane facility was required, and that simply adding one lane in each direction would not be effective. Mr. Shepperd remarked that his comments were based on experiences with I-64.

Mr. Kilpatrick stated the fundamental difference between the projects was the existence of a bridge. He continued that while it might be possible to build a 6 lane facility and then later expand it to an 8 lane facility, it was not practical.

Mr. Shepperd then asked if level of service "E" was the worst grade. Mr. Smizik responded that level "F" was the worst. Mr. Shepperd asked if the current level was an "E". Mr. Smizik responded that the service level was a "D" through most of the corridor, and an "E" or "F" over the bridge. Mr. Shepperd then asked if the goal was a "C". Mr. Smizik responded that interstate level of service should be a "C". After a brief discussion, Mr. Kilpatrick added that they were designing a 25 year horizon for the project (to the year 2040.)

Mayor Linda Johnson asked for the current height of the bridge. Mr. Kilpatrick responded that it was 65 feet. Mr. Smizik added that the current bridge is a draw span and has unlimited clearance for vessels.

Chair Krasnoff noted that there are times when traffic is stopped on the bridge, and he was certain that the level of service was worse than an "F" at those times. He then commended all parties involved for bringing this project forward so quickly. He then asked if the timeframe for completion of this project was three to five years. Mr. Kilpatrick confirmed that timeframe, noting that the challenging piece of the project would be how to pay for it.

Beyond Traffic – Trends and Choices in 2045: USDOT

Chair Krasnoff remarked about the relationship between ports and surface traffic highlighted in the 322 page report by the Department of Transportation. He then introduced Mr. Vinn White and Mr. Darren Timothy from the Innovative Project Delivery program of the Federal Highway program to discuss the report.

Mr. Vinn White began his video/teleconference presentation by giving a history of similar report efforts by other Secretaries of Transportation over the years going back to the 1970's. He noted that the most recent report was constructed by a group of 90 staff members, garnered input from more than 1300 individuals via public webinars, and took 15 months to complete.

Mr. White described the report as being divisible into three topic sections, the first being "Trends". The first trend he described was that the country is growing, and that there are expected to be an additional 70 million people added to the U.S. population by 2045, essentially adding to the U.S. population a number of citizens equal to the combined current populations of Florida, New York, and Texas.

Mr. White stated that Hampton Roads Port currently transports \$57 Billion in goods. He gave metrics on added expenses from wasted fuel and time. He noted expectations that freight volume by 2045 will increase by 45%. He discussed new technologies and how they are going to change things, noting specifically 3-D printing and the unforeseen impact it will have on the economy and transportation. He did note the increased use of automated delivery systems too.

They touched on transportation automation, not just cars but also ports and container facilities. He made note that climate change and rising sea levels were something to take into consideration using the "100-year-storm" as an example of old thinking noting that Hurricane Sandy and Hurricane Irene (both 100-year-storms) occurred within 18 months of each other.

He stressed the most pressing problem is where to find the money to pay for the projects. He noted that gas tax revenues weren't where they expected or needed them to be. He noted that transportation funding projects need not be just for highways, but also for rail, ports, and maritime avenues. He noted that an estimated \$77 Billion was needed to bring the federal system up to a state of repair. He stressed the importance of making good choices and sound investments.

He summarized the current projections of growth, when considered with an aging infrastructure not designed to carry the load that will be expected of it in a few years, leads to a bottleneck where we will realize that the situation is not sustainable from a transportation perspective.

He concluded his presentation by noting that they are communicating with organizations at the local and state level all over the country. They are collecting ideas and suggestions. He offered a website for anyone to leave a message/suggestion/history of their project. He also asked for reviews of the report especially if a correction is needed.

Chair Krasnoff thanked Mr. White and Mr. Timothy for their time and the presentation. He then summarized the VDOT presentation of the High Rise Bridge project. He then invited Mr. Tom Inglima to give an update on the Attorney General's opinion.

Update on AG Opinion: Counsel

Mr. Tom Inglima noted that the Attorney General issued an opinion on February 6th regarding general issues. He also noted that other Commission members are waiting on opinions from the Attorney General as well. He noted that those opinions should be issued in the next few weeks and the Board should be able to act on the RFP by the March meeting.

Update on the HRTAC Director and Officer Liability Insurance: Counsel and Staff

Chair Krasnoff offered the next item for discussion as the updated HRTAC director and officer liability insurance issues.

Dr. Camelia Ravanbakht stated that they had contacted the Virginia Municipal League. She noted that they have an agreement for the insurance program ready. She went on to say that the Agreement would be shared for informational purposes.

HRTF Financial Report and Project Update from VDOT

Chair Krasnoff invited Mr. James Utterback and Mr. Charlie Kilpatrick to share some good news they had recently received.

Mr. Kilpatrick stated that the CTB awarded the contract for improvements to I-64 (Phase 1). He noted that it is the first project awarded that is supported by HRTAC funds. He added that they received excellent competition during the bidding process.

Mr. James Utterback explained that the contract was awarded for \$84 Million, and that the budget for the project was \$144 Million. He noted that after contingency, engineering, and Right of Way are added, that the total will be around \$122 Million. He noted that the original project funding was made of \$100 Million of State money, and \$44 Million of HRTAC money. He ran through the math noting that the State money is spent first, and that it is anticipated that the \$22 Million of unspent HRTAC funds would be available for HRTAC or another project.

Mr. Kilpatrick added that this is still the very early stage of this project. He went on that VDOT is not yet prepared to recommend to the Board reallocation of the funds. He said VDOT would come back and recommend reallocation when the time was right, and that his vision would be to apply the funds to the next project in line, and so on. He also noted that this project is going to have full width reinforced shoulders that will allow shoulder lane use for emergency situations and evacuations.

Mr. Shepperd asked when construction was going to start. Mr. Utterback stated that the contract was awarded yesterday, and they haven't even had their first meeting with the contractor yet. Mr. Kilpatrick added that they were a number of months out still. He added that the contract was awarded to Shirley Contracting, whose past experience includes working in high traffic areas, the beltway, I-95, and the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

Mr. Utterback gave some discussion about Phase 2, and noted that they were planning on having a Design Public Hearing in April, with the RFP going out in July, with contract award sometime about this time next year.

Mr. Shepperd asked for clarification of the phases and segments. Mr. Utterback explained where the phases and segments started and stopped. Chairman Krasnoff noted that he had asked the staff to create an orientation for the new members. He asked members to let him know when he can send an email to poll them members for the best time for an orientation.

Mr. Rex Alphin publicly thanked Mr. Charlie Kilpatrick and Mr. James Utterback from VDOT for their graciousness in working with his county.

Mayor Linda Johnson publicly thanked them as well.

Next Meeting

The next HRTAC meeting will be held on March 19, 2015 at 12:30 PM.

Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission (HRTAC), the meeting adjourned at 1:53 PM.

Alan P. Krasnoff
HRTAC Chair