

HAMPTON ROADS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

MEETING – JUNE 20, 2007

The Hampton Roads MPO Meeting was called to order at 11:50 a.m. at the Regional Boardroom, 723 Woodlake Drive, Chesapeake, Virginia, with the following in attendance:

Paul D. Fraim, Chairman (NO)	Michael W. Johnson (SH)
Bruce Goodson, Vice Chairman (JC)	James G. Vacalis (SU)
James O. McReynolds, Treasurer (YK)*	Tyrone Franklin (SY)
Clifton E. Hayes, Jr. (CH)	Louis R. Jones (VB)*
Randall A. Gilliland (HA)	Jackson C. Tuttle II (WM)*
Stan D. Clark (IW)	Mark D. Rickards (WAT)
Joe S. Frank (NN)	Michael Townes (HRT)
Douglas L. Smith (PO)	Dennis W. Heuer (VDOT)

*Indicates late arrival or early departure.

OTHERS RECORDED ATTENDING:

Rebecca C. W. Adams, Amar Dwarkanath, Ella P. Ward (CH); Jesse T. Wallace, Jr. (HA); W. Douglas Caskey (IW); Sanford B. Wanner (JC); Randy Hildebrandt (NN); James B. Oliver (PO); Michael W. Johnson (SH); Linda T. Johnson (SU); Tyrone Franklin (SY); Robert M. Dyer, Barbara M. Henley, Meyera E. Oberndorf, James K. Spore (VB); William Harrell, Earl Sorey - Chesapeake; Elizabeth Kersey, Keith Cannady, Lynn Allsbrook, Mary Bunting - Hampton; Ron Williams, Stanley Stein, Jeff Raliski, Brian Pennington - Norfolk; George Brisbin, Brian Swets, Sherri Neil - Portsmouth; Bob Matthias - Virginia Beach; Mark Rickards - WAT; Dennis Heuer, Irene Shuman, Eric Stringfield - VDOT; Joyce Heffington, Ted Henifin - HRSD; Ray Taylor - FHR; Donna Morris - Hampton Roads Partnership; Chuck Cayton - Parsons Brinckerhoff; W. Dewey Hurley, Stuart Patterson - Branscome, Inc.; Duane Lougee, Randy Lougee - LWV-SHR; Ellis W. James - Sierra Club Observer; Tom Holden - The Virginian-Pilot; Germaine Fleet - Biggs & Fleet; Staff: Sam Belfield, Shernita Bethea, John Carlock, Rick Case, Rob Case, Nancy Collins, Dwight Farmer, Kelly Freas, Marla Frye, Greg Grootendorst, Julia Hillegass, Frances Hughey, Rob Jacobs, Tammy Karlgaard, Brett Kearns, Mike Kimbrel, Robert Lawrence, Keith Nichols, Kelli Peterson, Camelia Ravanbakht, Joe Turner, John Whaley and Laura Wheeling.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda contained the following items:

Summary Minutes of May 16, 2007 (MPO:MIN)

FY 06-09 Transportation Improvement Program
Amendment: VDOT (THY:TIP 06-09)

FY 06-09 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment:
Norfolk and Virginia Beach (THY:TIP 06-09)

FY 07 Unified Planning Work Program Amendment (THY:UPWP FY 07)

Mr. Jones Moved to approve the Consent Agenda; seconded by Vice Chairman Goodson.
The Motion Carried.

(Dr. Adams departed.)

NAVAL STATION NORFOLK AREA TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT STUDY: FINAL REPORT

(THY:UPWP FY 07 SS)

Chairman Fraim asked Mr. Dwight Farmer, Deputy Executive Director of Transportation, to present this information.

Mr. Farmer stated that the Navy and the City of Norfolk requested a traffic management study for Naval Station Norfolk. To their credit, they have a task force who meets monthly and they requested this study be performed to see how to make things better going in and out of the Naval base. Mr. Farmer reminded everyone that this particular site has more commuting going into and out of it than any other one site in the entire region. It is a major traffic generator.

Naval Station Norfolk has nine security gates currently operating into and out of it. Gates 1 through 5 have been upgraded, so the Navy has been working hard to better process people coming in and out and to help ameliorate problems on adjacent city streets.

(Ms. Henley departed.)

Mr. Farmer reviewed the study components that included existing conditions, alternative analyses and recommendations.

This study was performed over a two-year period. The first year was spent doing data collection and analysis, which was presented to the task force and the study group. Based on that information, they had six concerns to include delays at rail crossings, safety, congested key intersections, the manpower required for manual operations to

implement traffic management plans, gate management and utilization, and the abundant use of single occupant vehicles accessing the base.

Mr. Farmer reviewed a map depicting the delay at rail crossings. Rail preemption by the railroad is prohibited four times per day: the peak periods, and before and after the lunch period. Twenty percent of the preemptions still occur during the prohibited time frames, which is a concern for both the City and the Navy.

Safety concerns include speeding as well as accidents caused by the influence of alcohol. The Navy is very aware of this issue and has its own stiff penalties in addition to those imposed by the judicial system if their members are convicted of a DUI.

The two major congested intersections causing concern include Hampton Boulevard at Admiral Taussig Boulevard and Little Creek Road at Granby Street.

Another issue of concern includes traffic management and the manpower required to place and remove traffic cones in areas where traffic is manually diverted such as Hampton Boulevard at Gate 2 and Admiral Taussig Boulevard.

Another color-coded map showing a quick snapshot of gate utilization during the morning peak hour was reviewed. The gates on the eastern side are more heavily used than those on the western side, an issue that can hopefully be addressed. Normal gate capacity is about 700 vehicles per lane per hour under normal security conditions. When the base goes to a high security situation, the capacity is cut in half and has significant impact on the backup of traffic going into the gates.

Single occupant vehicle (SOV) commuter statistics are a concern. With the regional average of SOV use being 83 percent, the base has approximately 450 more vehicles entering it during the morning peak hour since 95 percent of the survey respondents to the Naval Station commuter survey said they commute alone.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies have been put in place and include express bus service, the Naval base shuttle, Traffic programs, HOV networking, commuting and carpooling subsidies from the federal government. After looking at this data, the Navy wants to become more involved in providing incentives to its carpoolers to help relieve some of the gate processing issues.

The recommendations for delays at rail crossings include the implementation of planned projects including the Hampton Boulevard Underpass (also known as the north gate area) and the NIT Central Rail project. The NIT Central Rail project adds 10,000 feet of track on the NIT facility so those trains can be worked on the facility rather than being worked while they are crossing key streets.

Safety recommendations include strategic placement of speed warning devices in the study area as well as increased enforcement efforts.

The recommendation for alleviating congestion from the intersections was implementing changes in signal phasing and additional vehicle detection equipment so the City and the Navy can better manage the traffic.

Then referring to the traffic management manpower, Mr. Farmer stated the suggestion is to install new automatic gates or similar devices to force traffic into the correct lanes when entering the base. This will improve traffic flow considerably and is less expensive.

In addition, to assist with gate management and utilization, it is recommended that real time dynamic messaging through variable message signs be implemented. This would provide communication to let people know where it is and is not congested so better decisions could be made when entering the base.

Additional programs could also be implemented to improve the number of SOV commuters. If a 10 percent reduction of SOV commuters occurred, this would make a considerable difference.

Mr. Farmer concluded his formal remarks and offered to answer questions.

(Messrs. Jones and Dyer departed.)

Vice Chairman Goodson asked if there has been any discussion to provide a gate specific to HOV commuters.

Mr. Farmer referred the question to Dr. Ravanbakht. She indicated this has not been discussed in the context of this study. Mr. Farmer stated it is something they should consider, but he believes the incentives discussed, particularly financial incentives or preferential treatment incentives, would probably be most effective. The incentives would need to be fairly significant to outweigh the disincentive of finding a new carpooler, staying matched since there are shifts that vary from day to day, etc.

Mr. Heuer Moved for approval and distribution of the report; seconded by Mr. Gilliland. The Motion Carried.

HAMPTON ROADS TRANSPORTATION PARTICIPATION PLAN

(THY:PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)

Chairman Fraim asked Mr. Farmer if he had a presentation for this item.

Mr. Farmer stated there was no presentation but added that the federal government continues to discuss the improvement of public participation, but as stated at the previous meeting, it is a work in progress. Efforts will continue in using state-of-the-art techniques to improve public participation. This is in public review now and will be brought back to the Commission in July with the results of significant comments. Some have already been received in the last couple days.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

(FYI)

The Chairman asked for questions or comments regarding the informational items. None were noted.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Fraim asked for any old or new business for the MPO.

Mayor Frank noted that in the press and in some of the public discussions about the regional transportation system and the Transportation Authority, that decisions have already been made about what projects will be built and their order and priority. He felt it should be made clear publicly that this is not true. No project has been determined to be in any priority, and the Authority does not come into existence until July 1, 2007, with the first organizational meeting to be held on July 18th. Mayor Frank indicated he wanted to publicly acknowledge and make clear to everyone that no action has been taken and no such discussions have taken place.

Chairman Fraim stated that people may have read an article in the paper that the Midtown Tunnel was keyed up to be the first project. There is no lineup of projects anywhere. No one has the ability to do that and there is no truth to it. There is no lineup other than what is listed in the legislation as to what moves forward first. That will be a decision that the new Transportation Authority makes.

Vice Chairman Goodson stated that the other thing that has been reported widely is that taxes would start January 1st. Many jurisdictions do not accept the taxes as they currently are and would like to see it amended before the taxes go into effect. None of those taxes go into effect until the Transportation Authority gets into place and certain decisions are made. That should also be made clear also.

Chairman Fraim indicated the organization meeting of the Transportation Authority is in July. The Transportation Authority has legal standing as of July 1, 2007. Mr. Collins is preparing an agenda of items to discuss at the first meeting.

Mayor Johnson stated she thought the legislation was that fees would begin January 1st.

Vice Chairman Goodson stated that was not the opinion of his county attorney. The Transportation Authority specifically has to vote to enact the taxes.

Chairman Fraim agreed and stated he believed that was correct, that after you have the organizational meeting and you have your bylaws, then the communities have to vote to impose the taxes.

Mayor Frank stated that early on the services of a law firm must be engaged so they can become expert in the law and provide advice as to the timing of all these issues. An accounting firm must be retained to set up how the Transportation Authority oversees collection and reporting of revenue as well as an investment advisor to help in the

understanding of the appropriate investment of the money as it comes in. All those issues are threshold issues that the group must collectively deal with.

Chairman Fraim stated he believes both are correct, it will take an affirmative vote of seven Transportation Authority members whose votes constitute at least 51 percent of the population of Hampton Roads to actually impose the taxes locally, and if seven members comprising 51 percent of the population say yes, then the taxes and fees are imposed upon everyone within the boundary of the Transportation Authority. Those taxes would be collected starting January 1st.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Hampton Roads MPO, the meeting adjourned at 12:09 p.m.