

Memo

To: RRTPO Policy Board

From: Chet Parsons, AICP CTP

Subject: RRTPO Boundary Adjustment

With the advent of the Central Virginia Transportation Authority in 2020, Mr. David Williams, Board of Supervisors (Powhatan), requested that RRTPO staff consider the opportunity to expand the RRTPO boundary to match both the PlanRVA boundary and CVTA boundary – Planning District 15. I held subsequent conversations with Dan Lysy, former Director of Transportation at PlanRVA, and Richard Duran, liaison with FHWA, to gather feedback on the prospect.

In these conversations, there seems to be an opportunity to assess the implications of a boundary change and determine if the positives outweigh the negatives for such a change at this time.

The information shared below is preliminary and is only intended to support starting the conversation by the RRTPO Policy Board. If there is interest, staff would be happy to support TAC and investigate the next steps and provide feedback to the board.

Expansion factors include:

1. The Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) boundary can be expanded from time to time to adapt to the growth of the region
2. The MPA is required to be evaluated following every decennial Census. The next time period for evaluation of the Richmond MPA is roughly 2022
3. Expansion of the MPA to include all of Charles City, Goochland, New Kent, and Powhatan Counties would present the following considerations:
 - a. The TPO boundary would match the boundary of PlanRVA and the CVTA and could increase public awareness and understanding of the TPO as well as general uniformity region-wide.

- b. RSTP/CMAQ funding may be available for projects in wider geographic areas of the four current partially-included jurisdictions.
- c. With a change to the MPA, rural transportation planning assistance from VDOT may become unavailable to assist in planning studies for the four rural jurisdictions (roughly \$58,000 annually). This loss would be realized by PlanRVA and would diminish staff budget for assistance to member jurisdictions.

The following pages contain resources that may be helpful in determining next steps if the desire of the Policy Board is to consider action on expanding the Metropolitan Planning Area. Highlighted sections signify direct impact on the expansion of the TPO boundary.

Staff's recommendation is to refer this item to the Technical Advisory Committee for consideration and action recommendation.

23 CFR § 450.312 - Metropolitan Planning Area boundaries.

§ 450.312 Metropolitan Planning Area boundaries.

(a) The boundaries of a metropolitan planning area (MPA) shall be determined by agreement between the MPO and the [Governor](#).

(1) At a minimum, the MPA boundaries shall encompass the entire existing urbanized area (as defined by the Bureau of the Census) plus the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within a 20-year forecast period for the [metropolitan transportation plan](#).

(2) The MPA boundaries may be further expanded to encompass the entire metropolitan statistical area or combined statistical area, as defined by the Office of Management and Budget.

(b) An MPO that serves an urbanized area designated as a [nonattainment area](#) for ozone or carbon monoxide under the [Clean Air Act \(42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.\)](#) as of August 10, 2005, shall retain the MPA boundary that existed on August 10, 2005. The MPA boundaries for such MPOs may only be adjusted by agreement of the [Governor](#) and the affected MPO in accordance with the redesignation procedures described in [§ 450.310\(h\)](#). The MPA boundary for an MPO that serves an urbanized area designated as a [nonattainment area](#) for ozone or carbon monoxide under the [Clean Air Act \(42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.\)](#) after August 10, 2005, may be established to coincide with the designated boundaries of the ozone and/or carbon monoxide [nonattainment area](#), in accordance with the requirements in [§ 450.310\(b\)](#).

(c) An MPA boundary may encompass more than one urbanized area.

(d) MPA boundaries may be established to coincide with the geography of regional economic development and growth forecasting areas.

(e) Identification of new urbanized areas within an existing metropolitan planning area by the Bureau of the Census shall not require redesignation of the existing MPO.

(f) Where the boundaries of the urbanized area or MPA extend across two or more States, the [Governors](#) with responsibility for a portion of the multistate area, the appropriate MPO(s), and the public transportation operator(s) are strongly encouraged to coordinate transportation planning for the entire multistate area.

(g) The MPA boundaries shall not overlap with each other.

(h) Where part of an urbanized area served by one MPO extends into an adjacent MPA, the MPOs shall, at a minimum, establish written agreements that clearly identify areas of [coordination](#) and the division of transportation planning responsibilities among and between the MPOs. Alternatively, the MPOs may adjust their existing boundaries so that the entire urbanized area lies within only one MPA. Boundary adjustments that change the composition of the MPO may require redesignation of one or more such MPOs.

(i) The MPO (in [cooperation](#) with the [State](#) and public transportation operator(s)) shall review the MPA boundaries after each Census to determine if existing MPA boundaries meet the minimum statutory requirements for new and [updated](#) urbanized area(s), and shall adjust them as necessary. As appropriate, additional adjustments should be made to reflect the most comprehensive boundary to foster an effective planning process that ensures connectivity between modes, improves access to modal systems, and promotes efficient overall transportation investment strategies.

(j) Following MPA boundary approval by the MPO and the [Governor](#), the MPA boundary descriptions shall be provided for informational purposes to the FHWA and the FTA. The MPA boundary descriptions shall be submitted either as a geo-spatial database or described in sufficient detail to enable the boundaries to be accurately delineated on a map.

[\[82 FR 56543\]](#), Nov. 29, 2017]

Regional Cooperation Act

§ 15.2-4207. Purposes of commission.

(a) It is the purpose of the planning district commission to encourage and facilitate local government cooperation and state-local cooperation in addressing on a regional basis problems of greater than local significance. The cooperation resulting from this chapter is intended to facilitate the recognition and analysis of regional opportunities and take account of regional influences in planning and implementing public policies and services. Functional areas warranting regional cooperation may include, but shall not be limited to: (i) economic and physical infrastructure development; (ii) solid waste, water supply and other environmental management; (iii) transportation; (iv) criminal justice; (v) emergency management; (vi) human services; and (vii) recreation.

Types of regional cooperative arrangements that commissions may pursue include but are not limited to (i) the facilitation of revenue sharing agreements; (ii) joint service delivery approaches; (iii) joint government purchasing of goods and services; (iv) regional data bases; and (v) regional plans.

(b) The planning district commission shall also promote the orderly and efficient development of the physical, social and economic elements of the district by planning, and encouraging and assisting localities to plan, for the future. If requested by a member locality or group of member localities and to the extent the commission may elect to act, the commission may assist the localities by carrying out plans and programs for the improvement and utilization of their physical, social and economic elements. The commission shall not, however, have a legal obligation to perform the functions necessary to implement the plans and policies established by it or to furnish governmental services to the district. Additionally, Planning District Commissions 1, 2, and 13 shall be designated as economic development organizations within the Commonwealth.

(c) The authority of the commission includes the power, to the extent the commission may from time to time determine, when requested to do so by a member locality or group of member localities, (i) to participate in the creation or organization of nonprofit corporations to perform functions or operate programs in furtherance of the purposes of this chapter; (ii) to perform such functions and to operate such programs itself; (iii) to contract with nonprofit entities, including localities, performing such functions or operating such programs to provide administrative, management, and staff support, accommodations in its offices, and financial assistance; and (iv) to provide financial assistance, including

matching funds, to interdistrict entities which perform governmental or quasi-governmental functions directly benefiting the commission's district and which are organized under authority of the Commonwealth or of the federal government.

(d) Nothing herein shall be construed to permit the commission to perform functions, operate programs, or provide services within and for a locality if the governing body of that jurisdiction opposes its doing so.

1968, c. 224, § 15.1-1405; 1972, c. 814; 1975, c. 381; 1984, c. 739; 1986, c. 164; 1991, c. 208; 1995, cc. [732](#), [796](#); 1997, c. 587; 1998, cc. [668](#), [686](#); 2009, c. [863](#).

§ 15.2-4208. General duties of planning district commissions.

Planning district commissions shall have the following duties and authority:

- 1. To conduct studies on issues and problems of regional significance;**
2. To identify and study potential opportunities for state and local cost savings and staffing efficiencies through coordinated governmental efforts;
- 3. To identify mechanisms for the coordination of state and local interests on a regional basis;**
4. To implement services upon request of member localities;
5. To provide technical assistance to state government and member localities;
6. To serve as a liaison between localities and state agencies as requested;
7. To review local government aid applications as required by § [15.2-4213](#) and other state or federal law or regulation;
- 8. To conduct strategic planning for the region as required by §§ [15.2-4209](#) through [15.2-4212](#);**
9. To develop regional functional area plans as deemed necessary by the commission or as requested by member localities;
10. To assist state agencies, as requested, in the development of substate plans;

11. To participate in a statewide geographic information system, the Virginia Geographic Information Network, as directed by the Department of Planning and Budget; and

12. To collect and maintain demographic, economic and other data concerning the region and member localities, and act as a state data center affiliate in cooperation with the Virginia Employment Commission.

1995, cc. [732](#), [796](#), § 15.1-1405.1; 1997, c. 587; 1998, cc. [668](#), [686](#).

§ 15.2-4209. Preparation and adoption of regional strategic plan.

(a) Except in planning districts in which regional planning also is conducted by multi-state councils of government, each planning district commission shall prepare a regional strategic plan for the guidance of the district. The plan shall concern those elements which are of importance in more than one of the localities within the district, as distinguished from matters of only local importance. The plan shall include regional goals and objectives, strategies to meet those goals and objectives and mechanisms for measuring progress toward the goals and objectives. The strategic plan shall include those subjects necessary to promote the orderly and efficient development of the physical, social and economic elements of the district such as transportation, housing, economic development and environmental management. The plan may be divided into parts or sections as the planning district commission deems desirable. In developing the regional strategic plan, the planning district commission shall seek input from a wide range of organizations in the region, including local governing bodies, the business community and citizen organizations.



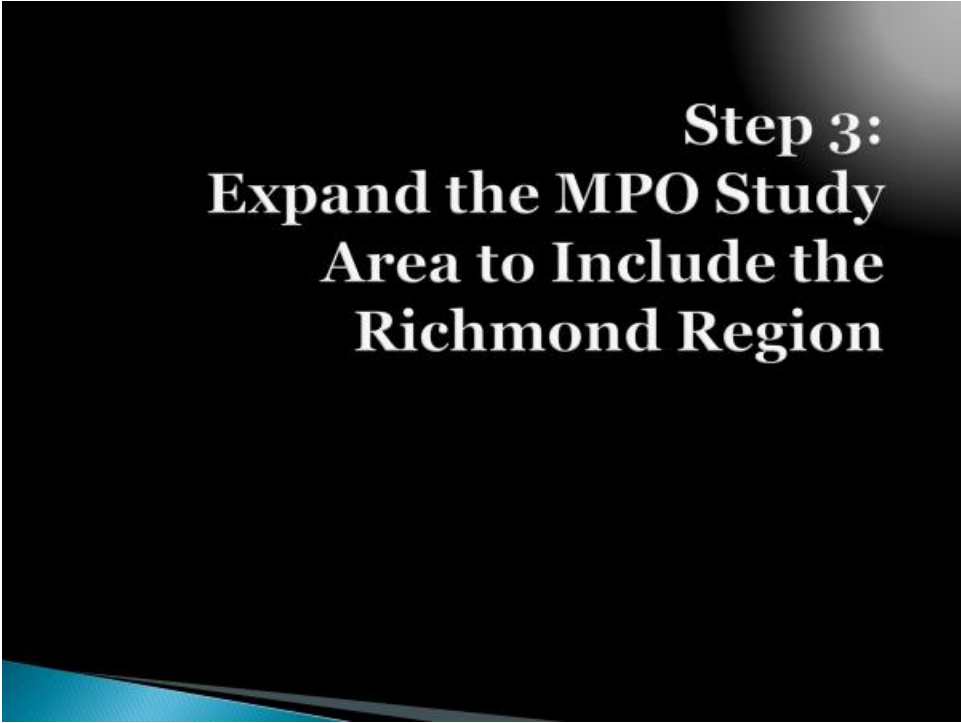
FHWA FAQ on adjusting MPA boundaries

What is the process for preparing and submitting adjusted MPA boundaries?

The determination of MPA boundaries is a State and local decision that should be made cooperatively between local MPO representatives, the Governor(s) and any adjacent MPOs. All boundary adjustments must be approved by the Governor(s) and submitted to the FHWA Division Office(s). The MPA boundaries must include the entire UZA boundary identified in the 2010 decennial Census and the contiguous geographic area likely to become urbanized within 20 years. Note: Please keep in mind that not all FHWA Division Offices have GIS capabilities; in some instances the State may be required to print hard-copy maps for the Division to review/approve. We stress that the approved (either signed or e-signed) boundaries files and maps must be retained and retrievable as part of the State's and FHWA's system file, until the next adjustment update. The area likely to become urbanized within 20 years should be determined by the area's existing MPO(s) and State DOT. If nearby UCs are likely to become urbanized within 20 years than they should be included. The MPA may include the entire MSA or CSA as defined by the Census Bureau. The MPA boundaries for MPOs representing UZAs designated as non-attainment areas for ozone and carbon monoxide pollution may be further adjusted to include the entire non-attainment area identified under the Clean Air Act (42 USC 7401 et seq.).

2014 RRTPO Background

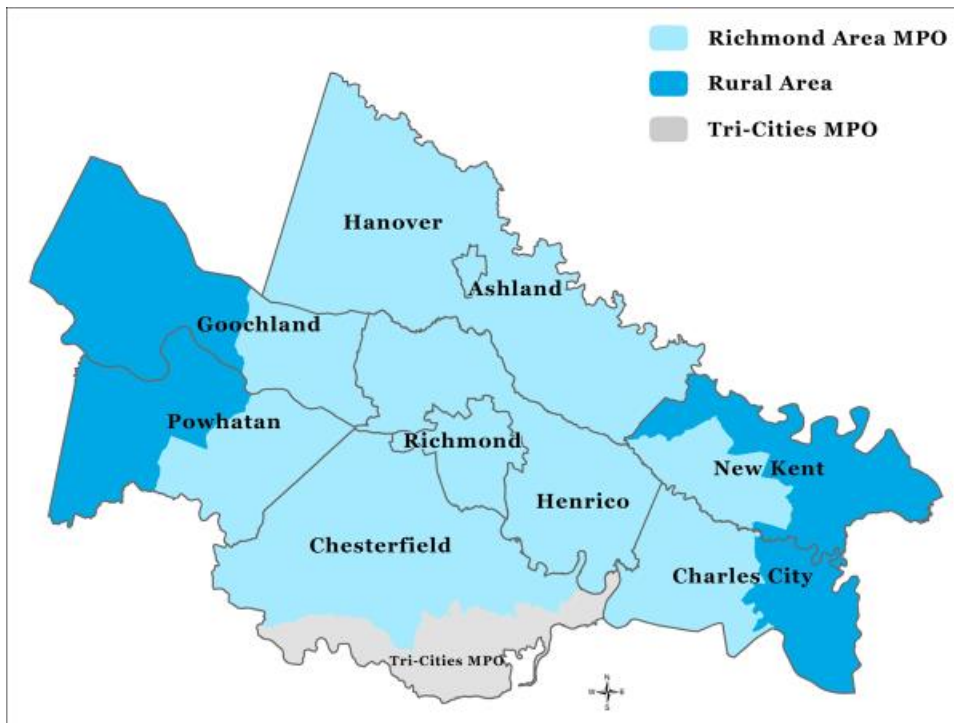
This effort was studied in 2014 and presented to the TPO (then the MPO) for consideration. The boundary change ultimately did not get approved but the reasoning for consideration still holds true. Dan Lysy and Bob Crum presented the concepts as part of a four step proposal, one of which was to expand the boundary. The following slide excerpts were presented to the TPO board by Bob Crum during those considerations and the meeting minutes from September 2013 provide context to the discussion held at that time.



**Step 3:
Expand the MPO Study
Area to Include the
Richmond Region**

Requirements for MPO Study Area

- ▶ **Determined by Agreement between Governor and MPO.**
- ▶ **At a minimum, must include existing urbanized area plus contiguous area expected to be urbanized in 20 years.**
- ▶ **May coincide with Air Quality Non Attainment Area.**
- ▶ **May coincide with geography of regional economic development and growth forecasting areas.**



Problems with Current MPO Study Area

- ▶ **Confusing public policy**
- ▶ **Regional impact projects in rural areas not eligible for funding**
- ▶ **Integration between Rural and Urban transportation**



Recommendation

- ▶ **Expand MPO Study Area to include the entire Richmond Region**
- ▶ **Coincides with PDC boundary and regional growth forecasting area**

Disadvantages to Study Area Expansion

- ▶ **\$58,000 in annual revenue to PDC for rural transportation planning program**
 - **Rural LRTP**
 - **Planning and design alternatives for Capitalizing on the Capital Trail – Charles City County**
 - **Inventory of Paved Roads – Goochland County**
 - **Regional Land Use Inventory**
 - **Traffic Calming Plan for Eltham Area of New Kent County**



Other Concerns

- ▶ **Expanded geography for MPO area with same amount of dollars for transportation investments**

- ▶ **However ...**
 - **Competitive Process**
 - **Projects with significant regional impact will rise to the top of project ranking**



RICHMOND AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION MINUTES OF MEETING

September 5, 2013 -- Chairman Williams asked Bob Crum to provide a PowerPoint presentation he shared with the Executive Committee at its August 23 meeting. He said the MPO has an opportunity to do things differently, to have the regional conversation about critical elements of transportation planning at the MPO table with the region's elected officials. Chairman Williams said he requested that Bob Crum prepare a presentation which has been presented to and endorsed by the Executive Committee for consideration by the full MPO board.

Bob Crum provided a PowerPoint presentation which began with a review of the MPO Mission Statement focusing on the phrase "...forum for cooperative transportation decision-making." He said the MPO table should be the place where MPO members, as representatives of the nine local governments, bring transportation challenges, problems, ideas for opportunities and ideas about how to address transportation needs of the future for the Region.

Mr. Crum said it is difficult to balance meeting the federal and state requirements and meeting the MPO's main goal of addressing regional transportation priorities and holding policy level discussions. He said MPO agendas currently lean toward satisfying the federal and state requirements and dealing with technical and procedural issues, but there is an opportunity to shift the focus toward discussion of the big regional transportation issues. Mr. Crum said he would outline a four-step process that could change the nature of MPO meetings and allow the MPO to be better recognized.

Step 1, Expand Use of Consent Agenda – Mr. Crum said this will allow MPO meetings more time to spend on regional policy conversations and less time bogged down with process and technical issues. Mr. Crum said the MPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) could make technical recommendations on procedural requirements to the MPO and those items would be placed on the consent agenda. He noted that any member of the MPO can request any item be removed from the consent agenda for discussion.

Step 2, Transform MPO Membership – Mr. Crum provided a chart which showed that on average, during the last six MPO meetings, elected officials averaged 40 percent of the board's voting attendance with 60 percent voting attendance being non-elected officials. Mr. Crum said in order to become that entity that discusses important Regional transportation policy issues, it is necessary to have the policy-makers – the elected officials – around the MPO table. He said currently the majority of the MPO is comprised

of full-time staff employees and that those staff are unable to engage in regional policy deliberations without going back to their elected officials. He said the staff needs to be at the table with elected officials serving as nonvoting MPO members in an advisory capacity. Mr. Crum also suggested that in place of the RRPDC Executive Director, the Richmond District Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) member be added as a member of the MPO board to give voice to the state's policy-making body.

Step 3, Expand the MPO Study Area – Mr. Crum suggested that the MPO study area be expanded to include the entire Richmond Region. Mr. Crum reviewed the minimum requirements for MPO study areas as well as allowable variations. Mr. Crum reviewed a map of the MPO study area saying that from his experience at public meetings throughout the Region, the MPO study area is incredibly confusing for citizens, and that public policy that is confusing is not good public policy. Additionally, he said there are occasional projects of regional significance in rural areas to which MPO funds cannot be directed since they are currently outside the MPO study area boundary. Mr. Crum said the regulations allow for expanding the MPO study area to include the entire Richmond Region, which coincides with the geography of regional economic development and growth forecasting areas. Mr. Crum noted that the disadvantage of this action would be loss of \$58,000 a year in federal and state rural transportation planning monies which are used to support transportation planning activities in the Region's four rural jurisdictions. He said that any disadvantages would be outweighed by the advantages and that this move would provide a truly regionally coordinated transportation planning investment system within the Richmond Region.

Step 4, Name Change – Mr. Crum said the recommended new name for the Richmond Area MPO is the "Richmond Region Transportation Planning Organization," which makes it very clear what the organization does as a board and removes any confusion about what the Metropolitan Planning Organization does. He said this will help the organization's identity, and combined with the three previous steps discussed, it creates a package that will allow the current MPO board to take the next step in terms of regional leadership. Mr. Crum said that if the board's mission is unclear by way of the name and study area configuration, and if the right people aren't at the table, such as elected officials, to have the conversations that will associate the board as the regional policy board that leads the transportation planning and programming effort, then people are going to continue to look for other avenues to take on the responsibility for transportation development in the Richmond Region.