

AGENDA

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RICHMOND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Thursday, September 5, 2019
8:30 a.m.

PlanRVA James River Board Room

MEETING QUORUM (Certification by RRTPO Secretary)

INTRODUCTIONS

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1. Approval of Meeting Agenda (Hodges)	-
ACTION REQUESTED	
2. Minutes of June 27, 2019 RRTPO Executive Committee Meeting (Hodges)	1 – 3
ACTION REQUESTED	
3. Open Public Comment Period (Hodges/5 minutes)	-
4. FY20 RRTPO Executive Committee Appointments (Hodges/5 minutes)	4
5. Chairman’s Report (Hodges/10 minutes)	-
a. Fall Transportation Forum: Nov. 7 at Randolph-Macon College	
b. Other	
6. RRTPO Secretary’s Report (Parsons/5 minutes)	-
7. Review of Selected RRTPO Agenda Topics (Parsons/5 minutes)	-
8. Other Business	
9. Next Meeting: October 3, 2019	
10. Adjournment: Targeted for 8:55 a.m.	

CAP/sr

Attachments

pc: Richard Duran, FHWA
Daniel Koenig, FTA Liaison
Jennifer DeBruhl, DRPT

Martha Shickle, PlanRVA
Eric Gregory, RRPDC Legal Counsel
Richmond Area News Media

**RICHMOND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Minutes of Meeting
June 27, 2019**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Patricia S. O'Bannon, **Chairman** Henrico County
 John H. Hodges, **Vice Chairman** Town of Ashland
 Manuel Alvarez, Jr. Goochland County
 Steve A. Elswick Chesterfield County
 Cynthia I. Newbille City of Richmond
 Patricia A. Paige (Alternate) New Kent County
 W. Canova Peterson, IV Hanover County

MEMBERS ABSENT

Floyd H. Miles, Sr. Charles City County
 C. Thomas Tiller New Kent County
 David T. Williams Powhatan County

MEETING QUORUM

Martha Shickle, PlanRVA Executive Director, staff to the meeting in the absence of Chet Parsons, RRTPO Secretary, reported that a quorum was present.

CALL TO ORDER

Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RRTPO) Chairman Patricia S. O'Bannon called the June 17, 2019 RRTPO Executive Committee meeting to order at approximately 8:30 a.m. in the PlanRVA James River Board Room.

1. Approval of Meeting Agenda

No changes were requested to the agenda and on motion of W. Canova Peterson, IV, seconded by Manuel Alvarez, Jr., the RRTPO Executive Committee voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

2. Minutes of the May 2, 2019 RRTPO Executive Committee Meeting

No changes were requested to the minutes and on motion by Steve A. Elswick., seconded by John H. Hodges, the RRTPO Executive Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the May 2, 2019 meeting as presented.

3. Open Public Comment Period

There were no requests to address the RRTPO Executive Committee.

4. Chairman's Report

Chairman O'Bannon expressed appreciation to members for consolidating the June and July meetings to the June 27 date said there would be discussion on cancellation of the August 1 meeting later.

5. RRTPO Secretary's Report

Martha Shickle reported on the following items:

- At the PlanRVA Commission meeting in June, action was taken for all groups of the Commission to have default distribution of agenda packages be electronic and hard copy distribution by mail would be on request. Members wishing to receive a hard copy of agenda materials by mail should notify Sharon Robeson [srobeson@planrva.org]. Several members voiced their desire to continue receiving a hard copy by mail.
- The Planning District Commission is turning 50 in August and will celebrate

its fiftieth anniversary with an open house in lieu of a Commission meeting on September 12; invitations will be sent to all RRTPO and standing committee members with details.

Mr. Alvarez reported that he tried to access the RRTPO policy board agenda packet on the PlanRVA website and kept getting a message that the page doesn't exist. He had to find his way through the website to get to the agenda package and had a very hard time finding anything related to the RRTPO. He said it was all RVA, more PDC. Mr. Alvarez expressed concern that you must scroll through the entire package to get to the item you need to read rather than being able to go directly to the item. He indicated he prefers to stick with a paper copy. Ms. Shickle responded that she would check to be sure that the website is working correctly noting that TAC members also had a difficult time with the website. She said there are still a few bugs being worked through, but the website should be user-friendly. Chairman O'Bannon noted difficulty with the website and also noted that it took quite a few more than the standard three clicks to find items she was looking for.

Chairman O'Bannon asked if there were any objections to canceling the August RRTPO Executive Committee and policy board meetings and there were none. On motion of Steve A. Elswick, seconded by W. Canova Peterson, IV, the RRTPO Executive Committee voted unanimously to the August 1 RRTPO meetings.

6. Review of Selected RRTPO Agenda Topics

Martha Shickle, PlanRVA Executive Director, reviewed RRTPO policy board agenda topics as follows:

- Consent Agenda A.3. – The GRTC projects presented in the agenda package as Item A.3.d. will be pulled for discussion. There is a handout containing a revised funding proposal for two of the items which were found by DRPT to be inconsistent with the Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP). The DRPT staff finds the revised funding plan to be an acceptable solution.
- There are several presentations on work efforts: Barbara Jacocks will report on the Complete Streets: Ashland Pilot Study and the park and Ride Investment Strategy Study Update. Sulabh Aryal will present information on the LRTP Socioeconomic Data presented for approval.
- Item B.4, FY20 Unified Planning Work Program – This item was approved for public review at the May 2 RRTPO policy board meeting and is presented today for RRTPO adoption. As a result of a public comment received, one additional work task has been added to the FY20 UPWP focusing on safety. This comment was received after the TAC met and so the work task added was not reviewed by TAC. There was discussion and clarification about what aspect of safety would be addressed in the new work task.
- The cover page of agenda item B.5. Ashland Resolution on Rail Safety erroneously references another item from a previous month, but the agenda report and the resolution correctly reflect the item listed on the agenda.

Concern was expressed about the length of presentations and Ms. Shickle said she would ask presenters to stay within the time allotted in the agenda.

7. Other Business

Chairman O'Bannon inquired if there were other items of business or other suggestions for future meeting topics. John Hodges introduced a resolution of

the Ashland Town council regarding the “Tier II, Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Washington, D.C. to Richmond, Virginia Rail Improvements.” He said the high-speed rail is not really high speed, but averages about 55 miles per hour (mph) with a top speed of 90 mph. He said the 3-2-3 proposed track through the Town of Ashland will create a serious bottleneck and Ashland is concerned that with increased volumes, this will destroy the town as they know it. He said the town believes that newer technologies should be considered to have true high-speed passenger rail like that in Europe and that passenger rail needs to be separated from freight rail. Mr. Hodges said he is submitting the resolution for consideration by TAC or another appropriate entity.

In response to a question, Mr. Hodges indicated the purpose of this resolution is not to rehash recent decisions on rail through Ashland. This is a request to look at new technologies that may have the potential for high-speed intercity passenger rail with its own right-of-way which would be reliable. Chairman O’Bannon read a portion of the resolution. Ms. Shickle asked if the Executive Committee would want to proceed in a similar fashion as with the Ashland resolution in the current agenda package by referring this matter to TAC for exploration.

Chairman O’Bannon related her experiences with Maglev in Europe and noted that this technology has not been advanced in Europe as anticipated. Mr. Elswick said he understands Ashland’s concern but there isn’t money for this. He said they are now looking for \$2 billion to build a bridge across the Potomac for the trains we have to get in and out of D.C. He said you can’t make America like Europe. Mr. Elswick said he believes this should not go to TAC because it is unrealistic to think anything can happen. Those decisions on rail are made beyond the RRTPO or even at the state level. Canova Peterson concurred saying he doesn’t believe TAC will be able to impact this issue; however, the need for developing new technologies needs to be brought to the forefront, but at a much higher level than the region. Mr. Richwine said this country would need to completely redo the entire rail system in order to provide service such as that provided in Europe.

Mr. Elswick said it is appropriate to include this resolution as an attachment to the minutes and have it on record. Martha Shickle suggested sharing this with other MPOs through VAMPO. On motion of John H. Hodges, seconded by Manuel Alvarez, Jr., the RRTPO Executive Committee voted unanimously to include the Town of Ashland Resolution as an attachment to the minutes and to share the resolution with other MPOs through VAMPO.

9. Next RRTPO Executive Committee Meeting

Chairman O’Bannon noted that the next RRTPO Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for July 27 consolidating the June 6 meeting with the July 4 meeting.

10. Adjournment

Chairman O’Bannon adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:10 a.m.

CAP/sr

Attachment:

Ashland Resolution on FEIS Washington, D.C. to Richmond Rail Improvements

**RESOLUTION OF THE ASHLAND TOWN COUNCIL
REGARDING THE TIER II, FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT (EIS), WASHINGTON, D.C., TO RICHMOND,
VIRGINIA, RAIL IMPROVEMENTS**

WHEREAS as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process to consider ways to improve intercity passenger rail service in Virginia entitled “DC to Richmond Southeast High Speed Rail” (DC2RVA), the Ashland Town Council passed three resolutions (July 5, 2016, January 6th and October 20, 2017), expressing Town concerns to the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Committee established to re-examine options for the DC2RVA project in the Ashland area so that the citizens of Ashland and surrounding areas would be offered the opportunity to view and recommend viable options; and

WHEREAS the information reviewed by the Committee and DRPT reinforced that any type of a third track constructed “at grade” through Ashland would:

- (1) dramatically impact the economic vitality and historic character of the Town and severely restrict vehicular and pedestrian access for many of the existing homes and businesses on Center Street in the heart of town,*
- (2) restrict access to Randolph-Macon College and fundamentally damage the usability, quality and safety of its historic campus,*
- (3) impose additional restrictions on vehicles and pedestrians moving in the east-west corridors through the Ashland; and*

WHEREAS while the Tier II Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) published in May 2019 by the FRA identifies the continued use of two main tracks through Ashland, with one additional track eventually being constructed to the north and south of Ashland, together with the construction of grade separated crossings at Vaughan Road and Ashcake Road, as a viable method for meeting the DC2RVA project’s service and performance goals, the “3-2-3 Alternative” , however:

- *the Tier II FEIS clearly states that the “3-2-3 Alternative” increases the average vehicle delay for the England Street/Thompson Street crossing from 12 cumulative hours per day in 2015, to 41 cumulative hours per day in 2045, thereby creating the “wall of trains” effect and a project bottleneck; and*
- *the Tier II FEIS clearly explains that the “3-2-3 Alternative” will fail when it says, “operation simulation for year 2045 estimated that having only two main tracks in Fredericksburg and/or Ashland failed to dispatch (i.e., the operations simulation concluded that the infrastructure had insufficient capacity for the number of trains projected to operate in the corridor in year 2045);” and*

WHEREAS the Ashland Town Council:

1. *Expresses its appreciation for the extra efforts provided by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, the Commonwealth Transportation Board and the Federal Railroad Administration to address concerns raised by the Town;*
2. *However, the Council believes the “3-2-3 Alternative” represents a temporary solution that helps achieve moderately higher speed passenger travel on a heavily used freight right of way, but leaves a cloud of uncertainty over the capacity of the Town’s portion of the right of way to accommodate projected demand for freight and passenger travel without practical alternatives due to future growth surrounding the Town potentially making a third track through downtown Ashland the only feasible long term alternative ensuring the future destruction of downtown Ashland; and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Council urges the DRPT and FRA to continue to evaluate options for true “High Speed” passenger transportation for the whole DC to Richmond Corridor that would preclude the projected adverse impacts of the “3-2-3 Alternative” on the Town and would include a strategic focus on new passenger transportation technologies that do not mandate the use of a 19th Century shared freight corridor or the use of fossil fuel engines; and

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the only option presented by DRPT through the Environmental Impact Study process that the Town of Ashland would consider a viable alternative in the future using only existing right of way is the Deep Bore Tunnel; and

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town of Ashland will work with all community, state, and federal entities to continue to collaborate and fully explore any and all alternatives that have the potential to meet the stated goal of providing high speed intercity passenger rail service in Virginia without the projected adverse impacts of the project on the Ashland community, as well as new technologies that have the potential to significantly enhance both freight and passenger transportation.

	Vote:
Steve Trivett:	Aye
John Hodges:	Aye
George Spagna:	Aye
Kathy Abbott:	Aye
Daniel McGraw:	Aye

Certified to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Ashland Town Council by a 5-0 vote on June 18, 2019



Matthew G. Reynal, Clerk of Council

Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization

Fiscal Year 2020 Executive Committee*

MEMBER

ALTERNATE

Town of Ashland

Mr. John H. Hodges, Chairman

Mr. George F. Spagna

Charles City County

Mr. Floyd H. Miles, Sr., Vice Chairman

Mr. William G. Coad

Chesterfield County

Mr. Steve A. Elswick

Mr. James M. Holland

Goochland County

Mr. Manuel Alvarez, Jr.

Ms. Susan F. Lascolette

Hanover County

Mr. W. Canova Peterson, IV

Ms. Angela Kelly-Wiecek

Henrico County

Ms. Patricia S. O'Bannon,

Mr. Frank J. Thornton

New Kent County

Mr. C. Thomas Tiller, Jr.

Ms. Patricia A. Paige

Powhatan County

Mr. David T. Williams

Mr. William E. Melton

City of Richmond

Ms. Cynthia I. Newbille

Mr. Andreas D. Addison

* Changes may be reported to the Chairman or the RRTPO Secretary prior to this meeting.