

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

Minutes

June 3, 2010

PRESENT:	Lance Terpenny	-Town of Christiansburg
	Richard Ballengee	-Town of Christiansburg
	Doug Marrs	-Montgomery County
	Becky Martin	-Blacksburg Transit
	Anne McClung	-Town of Blacksburg
	Steve Mouras	-Virginia Tech
	Richard Caywood	-VDoT (Salem)
	Dan Brugh	-BCM MPO
	Randal Gwinn	-Recording Secretary
ABSENT:	Tammye Davis	-FhWA
	Michael St. Jean	-VA Tech/Montgomery Regional Airport Authority
	Tony Cho	-Federal Transit Administration-Region 111
	Jeff Sizemore	-VA Department of Rail and Public Transportation
	Krishna Chachra	-Town of Blacksburg
	Adele Schirmer	-Town of Blacksburg
	Craig Meadows	-Montgomery County
	Kevin Byrd	-NRV Planning District Commission
NON-MPO PRESENT:		
	David Clarke	-VDoT (Christiansburg)

DECLARATION OF QUORUM AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Lance Terpenny declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 2:04 P.M.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Dan Brugh asked that the agenda be amended to include an addendum for an additional letter to Secretary Connaughton under New Business.

On a motion by Doug Marrs, seconded by Richard Caywood and carried unanimously, the agenda dated June 3, 2010 was approved as amended.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF May 6, 2010

Lance asked for discussion on and/or edits to the Minutes of the May 6, 2010 meeting. There being no comments he then called for a motion to approve the minutes.

On a motion by Richard Ballengee seconded by Doug Marrs, and carried unanimously, the minutes dated May 6, 2010 were approved.

PUBLIC ADDRESS

There being no speakers, the Public Address session was closed.

OLD BUSINESS

Authorization of Chairman to send letter to VDOT about the Six Year Plan

The Chairman commented that, at the last MPO Policy Board meeting, there was consensus for the TAC to develop a letter to present to VDOT at their public meeting on the Six Year Plan today at New River Community College. The TAC developed a letter as directed and recommends approval of the letter.

Lance then asked for discussion and there being none he then called for a motion to authorize delivery of the letter to VDOT.

On a motion by Anne McClung seconded by Richard Ballengee, and carried unanimously, the Policy Board approved the letter and authorizes the Chairman to present said letter to VDOT.

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June 3, 2010

Secretary Sean T Connaughton, Chairman
Commonwealth Transportation Board
1111 East Broad Street, Room 3054
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Secretary Connaughton,

On behalf of the Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Montgomery Area MPO, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Six Year Plan. We also would like to commend our local VDOT District and Residency staff, the VDOT staff that support our MPO, and the Local Assistance Division. These VDOT personnel have been extremely responsive to our requests for information and communication and collaboration on transportation issues and provide a level of expertise and professionalism that greatly benefits our region.

First, we appreciate the funding that is allocated to projects in this MPO. Particularly, the replacement of the westbound Route 114 Bridge over the New River, completion of the Route 114 widening in Christiansburg, and construction of the urban projects in Blacksburg will significantly improve our transportation network. Completion of the Secondary system projects in Montgomery County will also improve our transportation network.

We are concerned with the drastic reduction in funds available for transportation improvements in Virginia as indicated by this plan. Such a funding plan, while perhaps reflective of recent state revenues and program allocations, does not sustain the transportation network at a level that will support the economy of the Commonwealth or the health, safety and welfare of the citizens.

The attached letter from the Town of Christiansburg details a number of critically needed projects that are not programmed to receive funding in this plan.

Primary system funding is requested for a relatively inexpensive project at the Route 460 Bypass interchange at the southern limit of the Town of Blacksburg. This project was developed through a collaboration of representatives of the Blacksburg Partnership, the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center, the Town of Blacksburg, and the VDOT District Administrator with the goal of reducing current significant delays in the afternoon peak hour affecting a significant number of businesses, Virginia Tech, and the Via College of Osteopathic Medicine. This project, estimated to cost approximately \$1 million, would add right turn lanes to the Ramble Road/Industrial Park Road intersection. This relatively simple improvement requires minimal right of way, can be accomplished in a short time frame, and will significantly minimize queues now and under future traffic conditions.

Challenging financial times require creative and innovative solutions. Processes and formulas that were appropriate in decades past may not be anymore. Current allocations in current program categories are simply not sufficient to get the programmed projects completed. This is the time for the Commonwealth Transportation Board to consider whether more flexibility can be introduced across funding categories within Districts to enable more to be accomplished with limited funds. In addition, the Commonwealth Transportation Board should explore or allow for non-State dollars to be considered to match available federal funding.

An interchange is needed to replace the signalized intersection on the Route 460 Bypass at Southgate Drive in the Town of Blacksburg. This location is a primary entrance to the Virginia Tech and to the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center which is currently undergoing an expansion. Route 460 is regionally significant since it serves as access to Interstate 81. This interchange would remove the last signalized intersection on a major corridor that is currently posted for 65 MPH, thereby decreasing travel time, congestion issues, and safety concerns. In addition, future road extensions to the Prices Fork area will be served by this interchange. Virginia Tech has funded a study for this interchange and will be continuing with the IMR development. We would request that construction of this interchange be included in the Six Year Plan. The Six Year Plan should allow that a project such as this may be accomplished with non-State funds to match federal highway construction dollars.

Partially funding multiple projects can result in no projects being accomplished, while project costs escalate with time. In addition, if state matching dollars are not available for federal funds, or if federal funds cannot be obligated in a timely manner, those federal funds may be forever lost to the Commonwealth. If projects can be funded fully at the time in which they can be accomplished the citizens of the Commonwealth will be better served and more benefit will be achieved with each tax dollar spent.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Lance Terpenney, Chairman
Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Montgomery Area MPO

Attachments:

Cc: Dana Martin
Richard Caywood

LT/rlg

***Blacksburg/Christiansburg/Montgomery Area
Metropolitan Planning Organization***

June 3, 2010

Resolution Authorizing Chairman to send a letter to VDOT.

WHEREAS, the USDOT has a program to award discretionary Grants for transportation projects called Tiger II, and

WHEREAS, it appears that the Route 460 Interchange project near Southgate Drive qualifies for the program, and

WHEREAS, VDOT will be submitting grant requests from Virginia, and

WHEREAS, the MPO Executive Director has developed a letter requesting VDOT to submit a request for the Route 460 Interchange project.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the BCM MPO accepts the draft of the letter as recommended by the Executive Director.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MPO Chairman is authorized to sign the letter and present it to VDOT.

Attest: _____

Dan Brugh, Executive Director

NEW BUSINESS

Addendum to the letter to VDOT

Dan Brugh advised that since the TAC meeting, he had participated in a webinar and teleconference with VDOT that discussed the application process for TIGER II Discretionary Grants being administered by the USDOT. He thought that the MPO should send a letter to VDOT requesting that VDOT consider including the Interchange on Route 460 near Southgate Drive project in the State's Tiger II requests since it appears to meet the qualifications for funding and that the Virginia Tech donation of right of way would meet the required 20% non-Federal match. Dan then provided the group with copies of a letter he had drafted and pointed out that the pre application for the Grant would have to be filed with the USDOT by July 16, 2010 followed by the complete application prior to August 23, 2010, with awards anticipated to be announced after September 15, 2010. Dan closed his statement by saying that a quick reply from VDOT was necessary in order to allow the MPO and localities the opportunity to apply for the Grant themselves should VDOT not include the project in their requests.

At this point Richard Ballengee asked if the project had to be listed in VDOT's Six Year Plan prior to application for the Tiger Grant. Dan replied that it did not, however if the Grant was awarded, then the project would have to be added to the VDOT Six Year Plan. The project is already in the MPO Long Range Plan.

Doug Marrs asked if this request was likely to be accepted by VDOT. Dan replied that due to the 20% match required in urban areas, he felt it unlikely that VDOT would have many other submittals, however Richard may have something to add on this. Richard had no additional information.

At this point Lance stated that the additional letter was on the table for consideration and the Grant certainly couldn't be obtained without applying for it. He then called for a motion to send the letter to VDOT.

On a motion by Doug Marrs seconded by Richard Ballengee, and carried unanimously, the Policy Board approved the letter and authorizes the Chairman to present said letter to VDOT.

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Secretary Sean T Connaughton, Chairman
Commonwealth Transportation Board
1111 East Broad Street, Room 3054
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Secretary Connaughton,

In our letter to you regarding the update of the Six Year Plan, we requested inclusion of an Interchange on Route 460 near Southgate Drive in the 2011-16 Six Year Plan. A study to gather the information necessary to develop an IMR/IJR is being done by the MPO with funding from Virginia Tech. This Study is scheduled to be complete this summer.

Recently we have become aware of the Tiger II Discretionary Grant Program being administered by the USDOT. We believe that this project meets the requirements of the program and would be an excellent candidate. The Tiger II Program in urban areas requires a 20% non federal match. Virginia Tech has committed to donate the right of way necessary to construct the Interchange which, we believe, would meet the required 20% local match. The donation of right of way, based on fair market value, as the local match was specifically addressed in a webinar on June 1, 2010. In addition, when this project was in the VDOT Six Year Plan, the right of way estimate was over 30% of the total project cost.

The Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Montgomery Area MPO would like to formally request that VDOT include this project in the State's Tiger II requests. An early reply from VDOT is necessary so that local consideration of submitting an application can be done if VDOT does not choose to submit this project. The MPO will work with VDOT and supply any information it has from our Study for consideration of this request. Our Executive Director, Dan Brugh, can be reached at 540-394-2145 or by email at brughjd@montgomerycountyva.gov.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Lance Terpenney, Chairman
Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Montgomery Area MPO

Cc: Dana Martin
Richard Caywood

LT/rlg

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Update on 2035 Long Range Plan Development

Dan data for the 2035 LRP update is complete and that it is currently at VDOT for modeling.

Route 460 Interchange Near Southgate Study Update

Dan gave an update on the progress made thus far on the Study. Eighty-one people attended the April 29th public meeting on the topic, however no clear direction was forthcoming from the comments collected due to public confusion concerning the purpose of the meeting. A meeting of Steve Mouras, Michael Dunn, Joe Springer, Dan Brugh, and Randal Gwinn was held on May 27th to determine the interchange selection and review the remaining steps to wrap up the reports. The Study will be finished in the next several months and will be coordinated with the Study being conducted by the Blacksburg Main Street Task Force.

Update on the Warm Hearth Area Transit Study

Rebecca Martin stated that focus group meetings are still ongoing. Of 600 surveys sent out to residents, 20% were returned and 66% of those were positively inclined to the proposed service. Also it is becoming clear that many of the residents are in favor of afternoon and PM services. The Study should be complete this summer.

Other Items

There were no other items for discussion

NEXT MEETING

The next MPO Policy Board meeting is scheduled for July 1, 2010 at 2:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 P.M.

ATTEST:

Lance Terpenny, Chairman