

Rural Transportation Advisory Committee

DRAFT Minutes February 18, 2025

The video of the meeting can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IjnOzJRkm10>

VOTING MEMBERS		STAFF	
Tom Egeland, Louisa County	x	Gretchen Thomas, TJPDC	
Jim Frydl, Greene County	x	Christine Jacobs, TJPDC	x
Todd Fortune, Fluvanna County	x	Gorjan Gjorgievski, TJPDC	x
Dylan Bishop, Nelson County		Sarah Simba, TJPDC	x
Sandy Shackelford, VDOT, Culpeper	x	Taylor Jenkins, TJPDC	x
Carson Eckhardt, VDOT, Lynchburg	x		
Jason Espie, Jaunt	x		
Sara Pennington, Rideshare	x		
Alberic Karina-Plun, Albemarle County	x		
ALTERNATES		GUESTS/PUBLIC	
Rick Youngblood, VDOT, Lynchburg			
Stephanie Golon, Greene County			
Cindy King, Louisa County			
Carrie Shepherd, VDOT			
Trey Walton, Fluvanna County			
Emily Hjulstrom, Nelson County			
Vacant, Albemarle County			
Chuck Proctor, VDOT, Culpeper	x		
Vacant, Jaunt			

*** attended online via Zoom.**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The Rural Technical Advisory Committee Chair, Tom Egeland, presided and called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. The meeting was held on Zoom. Sara Pennington read the notice of electronic meeting. She reminded the voting members to keep their cameras on to be considered “present” at the meeting.

2. MATTERS FROM THE PUBLIC

- Comments by the Public:** None
- Comments provided via email, online, web site, etc.:** None

3. APPROVAL OF DRAFT MINUTES (2:57)

Motion/Action: Tom Egeland made a motion to approve the August 20, 2024 meeting minutes. Todd Fortune seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Motion/Action: Tom Egeland made a motion to approve the October 15, 2024 meeting minutes. Todd Fortune seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.



City of Charlottesville

Albemarle County

Fluvanna County

Greene County

Louisa County

Nelson County

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4. INTRODUCTION OF TJPDC'S TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR (MINUTE 3:33)

Christine Jacobs introduced Taylor Jenkins to the committee and gave a brief background on her work history and the areas in which she will be working at TJPDC.

5. FY26 RURAL TRANSPORTATION WORK PLAN (MINUTE 4:30)

Sara Pennington presented the annual work plan done annually for the Rural program, funded by VDOT. She noted that the state requires each PDC administering the program to identify activities to be undertaken.

She noted that the agenda packet includes a copy of the draft plan. She said she had sent out an email requesting any information on rural transportation needs anticipated for the next year. She said there is still time to provide feedback. She said the draft will go to the Commission at their March 6 meeting and will hopefully be adopted in April and then sent to VDOT.

She reviewed the draft work program highlights including the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan, the Regional Travel Demand Management Study, participation in the Pipeline Studies, SMART SCALE application support, and Long-Range Priorities and Plans.

She continued by sharing the budget for the draft work plan, which she noted is similar to the budget from last year.

She opened up the meeting with for discussion. Todd Fortune asked when the last regional bike plan was updated, to which she replied that it was probably in FY19, but said she would check to be certain.

Tom Egeland noted that with Smart Scale, it is becoming more difficult for the rural localities to apply, so he would like to put an emphasis on starting earlier on studying intersections and who is responsible for those studies. He encouraged all the members of RTAC to coordinate with VDOT starting this summer to start doing studies.

Todd Fortune noted that he has spoken with someone at VDOT regarding a roundabout at Routes 53 and 619 in Fluvanna. Chuck Proctor said it did not meet the safety requirements and was outside the area, so it didn't meet the UDA requirements, so it was not eligible in the past. He said it may not score very well, but he would look at the data again.

Tom Egeland suggested that the other Long-Range Transportation plans could be brought into a group conversation in the RTAC meetings to see how much time has passed since they were written, so perhaps they would need an update. He suggested perhaps a discussion at a future meeting might be about the 5-, 10-, and 15-year studies for the RTAC counties that may need a refresher.

He also said he'd like to learn more about pedestrian activities because it is difficult from a rural standpoint. For example, there are walking trails in Louisa and a property owner has agreed to extend that trail on his land that ends on a street. He said that is the first pedestrian activity they have done in a while. He said he understands it is easier to plan bike/ped projects in a more urban environment, but noted it is more challenging for a rural county. He said perhaps that could be addressed at a future meeting as well.

Todd Fortune said several of Fluvanna's comprehensive plans are 15-20 years old and could use some updating. He said they were done by the TJPDC in the past.

Jason Espie noted that the extension of the Three Notch'd Trail is underway and there is talk of it being a regional asset. He noted that if they complete Albemarle's piece of the trail, the others become easier to build in the future.

Ms. Jacobs noted that the Three Notch'd Trail is in the MPO's UPWP.

Mr. Fortune noted that Bike Route 76 is currently being re-routed through Palmyra Village and perhaps there can be a conversation about that. Ms. Pennigton said she would look into it.

Mr. Egeland asked if there were any grants that staff was looking into for this year. Ms. Jacobs said this is handled on a case-by-case basis depending on the localities' needs. For example, it could include the Safe Streets and Roads for All implementation, Smart Scale, and any other locality- or regional-specific applications that present themselves. The line item in the budget is a place holder for when opportunities present themselves. She noted the money does not roll over into the next fiscal year and must be used by the end of June. She suggested that the CTAC group look at the budget and see if the line items need to be amended throughout the year to be certain that priorities are being met.

After some discussion, it was decided that the budget will be re-presented at the next meeting with costs for admin and cost for programming so as not to trigger an amendment process if the committee decides to change priorities. It is still important to list the projects that will be worked on, but there does not need a value assigned to each project.

6. VDOT PROJECT UPDATES/SMART SCALE SCORING (MINUTE 29:08)

Culpeper District

Chuck Proctor presented the Smart Scale recommendation review. He noted that it was not good for this region this round due in large part to the shift of \$1.6 million from construction into maintenance costs. He shared a comparison of Culpeper District funding amounts among Smart Scale rounds. He noted that Rounds 4 and 5 funding reflected phasing in of the Supplemental Fuels Tax (SFT) with Round 6 reflecting the fully-phased SFT. He noted that the High Priority Project (HPP) program is competitive state-wide and is not guaranteed.

He said out of \$68 million in funding there was \$6.6 million that needed to come out of that total to pay for the escalation in costs of 7-8 projects that had already been approved.

He continued sharing the initial scoring outcome observations including that 53 projects out of 270 submissions were recommended for funding statewide and 4 out of 24 were recommended in the Culpeper District. He noted that changes in land use, economic development, HPP funding process, and changes to HPP eligibility lowered the scores, increased the cost of the projects, and reduced the number of projects approved.

He shared the full district ranking list and noted that the Culpeper district scored relatively well, but there is a limited amount of money, and there is not enough to cover very many projects.

He said the next steps are public hearings from April to May on staff recommended scenarios and any potential revisions. Then at the May CTB meeting, a consensus funding scenario will be developed, and the adoption of the Six-Year Improvement Plan (SYIP) will be adopted at the June CTB meeting.

Mr. Proctor said there was an email sent to the localities with a survey about the process asking that everyone to fill that out so VDOT can improve the process in the future. He said VDOT will be starting in late summer.

Lynchburg District

Carson Eckhardt, VDOT, said the Tanbark/Route 151 roundabout got funded for \$12.5 million in Nelson County. He said they are going to focus on Rockfish for the next round.

He said the Lynchburg district had 12 projects submitted in and four were recommended for funding totally about \$80 million.

He said the safety score was the main factor for the Tanbark roundabout getting funded.

7. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION & IDENTIFICATION OF FUTURE TOPICS (MINUTE 40:53)

Louisa County

Tom Egeland said the planning commission is focusing on growth areas for the land use map. They are working on land development regulations and clean up.

Albemarle County

Alberic Karina-Plun said they are continuing to work on their comp plan updates. He said the land use chapter will be going to the Board tomorrow. They are currently writing their transportation chapter. He said the County is putting zoning notice signs on location instead of just mailing letters and noted that he has had a great deal of response from residents because of the signs.

Fluvanna County

Todd Fortune said Fluvanna is continuing to try to update their comp plan. The next step is appointments to advisory groups. There are community meetings set for the end of February, beginning of March. He said they are short-staffed right now because their GIS technician left. He also said they are pursuing a TAP grant for the upcoming cycle for Phase Two of the Fork Union streetscape.

Greene County

Jim Frydl said they are helping update the Town of Stanardsville with their comp plan. He said Greene will be touching base with TJPDC to get some help with updating some of the charts that were previously created in the past. He said they are also working through local administration of a Smart Scale project that is just beginning.

Rideshare

Sara Pennington said she submitted the FY26 operating grant to DRPT. She said she is also in the process of completing the CAP Strategic Plan for adoption.

Gorjan Gjorgjievski said he is coordinating one-on-one Safe Street for All (SS4A) meetings with each of the localities to discuss safety criteria, the existing conditions report, and some jurisdictional snapshots regarding the high injury network. After these meetings are held, he said the data will be put into the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan. He would like to present to the various boards of supervisors in April to get feedback on the plan. Staff will take the feedback and incorporate it in the plan. The plan must be adopted by the end of June.

It was noted that the next Notification of Funding Opportunity will be available for the next round of SS4A at the end of March.

Jaunt

Jason Espie reported that Jaunt had a board retreat in January with the specific purpose of prioritizing initiatives. He said the five priorities are: upgrade dispatch software, implement microtransit demos in Greene County and ADA service in the Charlottesville urbanized area, create a performance evaluation process, maintain an active presence as Charlottesville Albemarle Regional Transit Authority (CARTA) develops, and work with CAT on formalizing their ADA agreement with them.

Todd Fortune asked if any of the counties have done a joint comp plan with the town(s) in their locality. He said if anyone had an interest, he has a contact that has done it and would be willing to share the information.

Mr. Egeland reminded the committee members that if they do not have an alternate appointed to the committee, to please work on that and get the information to Ms. Pennington.

Future Meeting Topics

Mr. Egeland requested a legislative update due to changes coming on July 1 and the changes at the federal level.

Mr. Proctor said they are having a meeting on POC next week and any changes or updates to Smart Scale, so he can report back to the committee on those. He noted that he would like to see a change to the area type from Area Type C to Area Type D because he thinks it will help get better scores for the applications.

Ms. Jacobs said what is going on in the Commonwealth with rail is important for the group to be paying attention to.

Mr. Espie said not to forget the Virginia Breeze because it helps folks get access to places that the rail does not run through

7. Additional Matters from the Public

None.

Adjourn

Tom Egeland adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

The next meeting is *in person* April 15, 2025 from 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. at the Water Street Center, 407 E Water Street, Charlottesville, VA.