

Rural Transportation Advisory Committee

DRAFT Minutes November 18, 2025

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

VOTING MEMBERS		STAFF	
Tom Egeland, Louisa County	x	Gretchen Thomas, TJPDC	x
Jim Frydl, Greene County	x	Taylor Jenkins, TJPDC	x
Todd Fortune, Fluvanna County		Sarah Simba, TJPDC	x
Dylan Bishop, Nelson County	x	Longa Ende, TJPDC *	x
Sandy Shackelford, VDOT, Culpeper	x		
Carson Eckhardt, VDOT, Lynchburg			
Jason Espie, Jaunt	x		
Sara Pennington, Rideshare	x		
Alberic Karina-Plun, Albemarle County	x		
ALTERNATES		GUESTS/PUBLIC	
Rick Youngblood, VDOT, Lynchburg		Grant Sparks, DRPT	x
Stephanie Golon, Greene County		Katy Miller, DRPT	x
Cindy King, Louisa County			
Carrie Shepherd, VDOT			
Alex Porter, Fluvanna County *	x		
Emily Hjulstrom, Nelson County			
Vacant, Albemarle County			
Chuck Proctor, VDOT, Culpeper *	x		
Vacant, Jaunt	x		

*** online attendance**

1. CALL TO ORDER (MINUTE 2:41)

The Rural Technical Advisory Committee Chair, Tom Egeland, presided and called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

2. MATTERS FROM THE PUBLIC

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

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS (MINUTE 3:10)

Tom Egeland said he would continue as Chair and Dylan Bishop stated she would continue as Vice Chair for FY26.

Motion/Action: Tom Egeland nominated himself as Chair for the next term. Jim Frydl seconded and the motion passed unanimously.



Motion/Action: Tom Egeland made a motion to elect Dylan Bishop to remain as Vice Chair. Jim Frydl seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF DRAFT MINUTES (MINUTE 4:24)

June Meeting Minutes

Regarding Smart Scale, Tom Egeland said he was in support of the change if it benefits the region.

Motion/Action: Tom Egeland made a motion to approve the June 17, 2025, minutes with the changed mentioned above, Jim Frydl seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

August Meeting Minutes

Motion/Action: Tom Egeland made a motion to approve the August 19, 2025, minutes, Jim Frydl seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Pennington noted that the next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, and it will be all-virtual. She also said that the Rural Work Plan and additional steps for the Rural Needs Assessment will be on the agenda for that meeting.

5. VIRGINIA RURAL TRANSIT STRATEGY (MINUTE 7:16)

Grant Sparks introduced himself and Katy Miller. Mr. Sparks said unfortunately, the federal money they are receiving is not going as far as it used to in the past. He continued with an overview of Virginia's Rural Transit Program.

He noted that the Rural Transit Program is facing new pressures due to federal program and policy changes, transit industry changes, and interest from new rural localities.

He presented all federal revenues vs needs FY24 vs FY31 and there is a significant difference between the two. He said in FY27, he said the DRPT should have enough FTA Section 5311 Rural Area Formula Grant funds to support all operating needs of existing agencies and some capital needs. For FY28 and beyond, DRPT will most likely only have enough guaranteed new federal rural funding to support operating needs of existing agencies but at less than 50%. He also said that DRPT is planning for all possibilities.

He presented the strategy objectives. The first is to identify statewide goals and priorities for the Virginia Transit Program. The second is to further understand what is driving cost increases in the rural transit program and identify cost control methods that can be applied. Third, define how DRPT will prioritize the allocation of limited Federal funds to rural areas based on the goals and priorities identified. Lastly, to identify potential long-term strategies for how Virginia and DRPT can seek to remedy funding shortfalls.

DRPT has created a Rural Strategy Advisory Group to include partners and stakeholders who provided strategic direction for the study.

He presented the project timeline with a final report due to DRPT at the end of November.

Mr. Cook continued with the summary of findings of the peer state review. Key findings were that some states had a formula approach, and some states only use 5311 funding for capital and some for operating, Virginia uses it for both. There are other options for funding that other states use as well.

He said that local match for capital projects (4%) in Virginia is lower than all peer states. He said it may be the lowest in the country. OH, NC, TN, and WA allow any city, county, or transit authority to impose an additional sales tax approved by voters to support public transit.

He presented potential funding strategies. The first allows for a higher max state match are on rural capital projects. The second is to identify alternative funding for the Virginia Breeze, and the third is to use other state-controlled federal funding.

Mr. Cook said strategy 1 is to prioritize distribution of 5311 funding by either prioritizing 5311 funding for operating support or ensure 5311 funding for operating and capital support each year. The consensus was to focus on operating before the localities could look at capital funding which they said they could ask the localities for in the future.

Strategy 2 is to change how 5311 operating funds are allocated. Option 1 is allocation based proportionally on estimated budgets, and option 2 is allocation based on formula with historic data. He said the second option is more predictable than it is today.

Mr. Cook continued with Strategy 3, which is to increase local match for rural capital projects. The options were to increase local matches for all rural capital projects to 10% or increase local matches for all rural capital projects to 20%. The consensus was to increase the local match to 10%.

He presented potential operating cost mitigation strategies that included year-over-year growth cap, fund expansions of existing rural service with MERIT demonstration funding and make certain operating cost categories ineligible for 5311.

He said they are looking carefully at extending minimum useful life for certain vehicle types from 4 years to 5 years, and cooperative procurements by exploring ways to implement bulk/cooperative procurements for high-cost items.

He said next steps include a final report, a one-page briefing document for transit agencies and stakeholders, and some considerations for FY28 and beyond.

There was a brief question-and-answer session after the presentation.

6. VDOT UPDATES (MINUTE 52:58)

Sandy Shackelford said VDOT has reached out to most of the localities re: Smart Scale applications. She said the new Smart Scale technical guide will go out in December. There is also a survey that has been sent out, and Ms. Shackelford encouraged all who have received it to please submit your answers.

She said there is \$68 million in the Smart Scale budget so VDOT is focusing on how to prepare the most competitive applications as possible.

Chuck Proctor said OIPI has updated the VTRANS needs to 2023. It has not taken into consideration the Area Type for TJPDC, so that will need to be revised.

7. TJPDC UPDATES (MINUTE 57:00)

Smart Scale Area Type Change

Sara Pennington said the CTB has the Smart Scale Area Type Change on their December agenda.

8. RURAL TRANSPORTATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT (MINUTE 58:05)

Sara Pennington reported that staff set out to look at a rural transportation needs assessment to understand the needs of their rural jurisdictions. She said there is memo sent out in the agenda packet and in an email this morning with a survey. She encouraged the members to take the survey to provide feedback to staff for the upcoming work programs. She noted that it would be best if each locality met as a group and responded as one and not to have numerous staff taking the survey. She said the work program will be available for review at the February meeting. The deadline for the survey is December 5.

Sara Pennington noted that Logan Ende was instrumental in pulling all the plans together and Sarah Simba created the survey.

Mr. Egeland said perhaps there can be a presentation at a future meeting on best practices and/or common issues found from what is learned from the survey. He said that perhaps TJPDC might recommend to the localities that there are, as an example, “three questions that each locality should ask” in their comp plan survey to help at a regional level.

Taylor Jenkins said the final reimbursement has been submitted for the Safe Streets and Roads for All plan. She anticipates a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) in late winter for implementation projects. She asked the members to reach out to TJPDC if they are interested in applying for this grant.

Ms. Jenkins noted that there will be renovations at TJPDC starting in January and running for at least six to eight weeks.

10. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION & IDENTIFICATION OF FUTURE TOPICS (MINUTE 1:12:30)

Greene County

Jim Frydl said Greene County is amid local administration of Smart Scale Round 2 project. Kimley Horn is working on that project with them on Greene County’s behalf. He said there are some things that need to be added to the scope. There may need to be some more interest from the state funding sources. He also said that the County had a by-right development in Stanardsville. He said the bypass highway has limited access, and the applicant offered to build an entrance to the limited access highway. The Board decided to not support the resolution. Approximately a year later, the CTB decided to disregard the Board’s decision because it is a safety issue and approved the entrance.

Nelson

Dylan Bishop reported that they are in the subdivision update of their comp plan. She said short-term rentals and lot area sizes are hot topics at the moment. She said there are three overlay areas, a Route 151 corridor overlay, and a Route 29 corridor overlay. She also reported that there is a new planner and potentially a new planning commissioner in January.

Ms. Bishop reported on the most recent Rural Planning Caucus.

Louisa County

Tom Egeland said Louisa has hired an Agricultural Development and Land Conservation Coordinator. He said there will be more information on that coming at future meetings. He said there is a great deal of support on that hire.

Ms. Bishop noted that the American Farmland Trust put out the Planning for Agriculture in Virginia toolkit last month.

Mr. Egeland also reported that Louisa has launched their comp plan survey.

Ms. Bishop said “Life in the Heartland” did an episode on Rural Planning. She recommends folks watch it and share it with the Boards and Planning Commissions.

Albemarle County

Alberic Karina-Plun said Albemarle got their comp plan adopted on October 15. He reported that is a public survey for VDOT’s 5th Street Interchange pipeline study.

Jaunt

Jason Espie said the CEO of Jaunt made a presentation to the City Council last night. Mr. Espie gave stats on their ridership but recommends that folks watch the recording of the Council meeting. He is the first agenda topic.

He reported that Jaunt got a grant for Mobility on Demand. He said that Jaunt just signed a contract with FIA for transit for the City and Greene County. Mr. Espie said the concept is either to extend the 29 North Connect or dedicate a commuter route to Greene County. He knows there is support for transit from Greene to Charlottesville, but there is a lot of work to be done in communications and marketing to make that happen. He also reported that Jaunt did a survey in July and the results are on the website. He briefly reviewed the feedback from the survey.

He also shared that Jaunt had its 50th anniversary this year.

Lastly, he said Jaunt is going to be changing their scheduling software this coming year.

Fluvanna County

Alex Porter said Fluvanna is working on their comprehensive plan.

VDOT

Sandy Shackelford said she did not have any more updates to share.

Grant Sparks said 64% of rural Virginia residents have access to transit.

8. Additional Matters from the Public

None.

Adjourn

Tom Egeland adjourned the meeting at 2:38 p.m.

The next meeting is VIRTUAL on February 3, 2026 from 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. at the Water Street Center, 407 E Water Street, Charlottesville, VA.