

Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission
Rural Transportation Technical Committee
May 6th, 2009
Minutes

Attendees: Matthew Bolick (VDOT Culpeper Residency), John Egertson – *Chair* (Culpeper County Planning), Sue Hromyak (RRRC), Debbie Kendall – *Vice Chair* (Orange County Planning), Patrick Mauney (RRRC), Ray Parks (RRCSB-AAA), Cynthia Porter-Johnson (Fauquier County Planning), John Shelburne (VDOT TMPD), Jeff Walker (RRRC), Cathy Zielinski (RRRC)

Guests & Speakers: Jim Charapich (Culpeper County Chamber of Commerce); Andy Hecker (Moffatt & Nichol)

Welcome and Introductions, Agenda, Minutes, Matters from the Public

J Egertson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

The agenda was approved as presented.

The minutes were approved with no changes.

Presentation on Virginia Inland Port & Port of Virginia Operations

Andy Hecker of Moffatt and Nichol, who provide program management for the Port of Virginia, presented an overview of the activities relating to the Port of Virginia facilities in Hampton Roads and the Virginia Inland Port, located in Front Royal. Most recently, Moffatt and Nichol has worked on a 2040 Master Plan for the Port of Virginia facilities and an Executive Summary is currently available (<http://portofvirginia.com/media/11163/2040mpexecsum.pdf>)

Major themes from the presentation included the growth in global trade and its effects on activity at the Port of Virginia. The Port is beginning to see deliveries directly from China and Southeast Asia as a result of shippers using the Panama Canal, rather than delivering to the West Coast and shipping across the U.S.A. This change in shipping presents numerous opportunities for economic development relating to both the Port of Virginia and the Virginia Inland Port, as well as introducing additional stress onto the transportation infrastructure. Mr. Hecker reported that 9% of Virginia's employment – 343,000 jobs – is related to Port activities, according to a study by William & Mary. All 48 continental United States are served by container goods shipped through the Port of Virginia.

At present, the Virginia Inland Port receives shipments via truck and rail from the Port of Virginia. Norfolk Southern track runs from the Port of Virginia to the Inland Port and further west. Two potential corridor changes that may affect traffic into, and out of, the Inland Port, are the Heartland Corridor and the Crescent Corridor. The Heartland Corridor runs to Chicago via West Virginia and Columbus, Ohio and would cut 233 miles off of the rail distance from the Port of Virginia to Chicago and would bypass the Inland Port. The Crescent Corridor is a potential truck to rail cargo diversion route with potential stops in Harrisburg, PA, Front Royal, Charlotte and Atlanta, among other locations. These two corridors are still in preliminary phases, with track improvements needed at tunnels and bridges on the Heartland Corridor.

J Walker asked about potential opportunities for the PD9 region to benefit from its location near the Virginia Inland Port. Mr. Hecker responded that the region would do well to identify commodity-level data and wholesalers and suppliers that ship through the region in an effort to attract distribution centers or similar freight facilities. Mr. Hecker also urged interaction with state-level planners and policymakers through such initiatives as the VTrans 2035 Plan.

J Charapich asked about whether Foreign Trade Zones were helpful in attracting the types of businesses that utilize the Port of Virginia facilities. Mr. Hecker indicated that these would be influential in any discussion with shippers and distributors working with the Port and Inland Port.

PD9 Regional Freight Study Update

C Zielinski updated the committee on the ongoing RRRC Regional Freight Study. The study will provide a rural perspective for the Statewide Multi-Modal study and will analyze the freight traffic on the highways and railroads within PD9, along with economic development opportunities on those same corridors. A draft Physical Infrastructure profile has been completed, and the study will also consist of Commodity-level analysis, a survey of regional Shippers and Manufacturers, as well as recommendations for local and regional priorities and policies.

J Walker indicated that the Freight Study committee is seeking to clarify regional opportunities regarding inter-modal distribution centers and has met with stakeholders from Norfolk Southern to ascertain future plans for the rail corridors through the region.

FY'09 Travel Time Corridor Study Segments

P Mauney provided committee members with potential Travel Time Corridor Study segments via e-mail on 4/14/2009 and asked for any additional segments to be identified prior to the May committee meeting. Paul Russell, from VDOT Warrenton Residency, asked that Route 28 in Fauquier County be considered, in addition to the three identified segments on Routes 3, 17 and 211.

Committee members present stated that the three segments identified originally would be suitable for the 2009 study and asked that Route 28 be included in the 2010 Travel Time Corridor Study. The 2009 study should be available for review at the June 3rd meeting.

Announcements and Other Business

J Walker provided a brief update on the ongoing VTrans Statewide planning process. Draft chapters on Regional and Local Decision Making and Economic Development are expected for review and will be distributed via e-mail. (Note: The draft Regional and Local Decision Making chapter was distributed via e-mail from J Walker on 5/12/2009)

Other announcements included:

- Virginia Regional Transit will hold a grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony for its new Culpeper facility on May 19th at 10a.m.
- Links for online training from VDOT for Chapter 527 regulations have been distributed to committee members.

Next Meeting and Adjournment

The next meeting of the Rappahannock-Rapidan Rural Transportation Committee will be Wednesday, June 3rd at 10am.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.