

**New River Valley  
Metropolitan Planning Organization  
755 Roanoke Street  
Christiansburg, VA 24073**

**Minutes**

**March 7, 2013**

PRESENT:	Craig Meadows	-Montgomery County
	Annette Perkins	-Montgomery County
	Anne McClung	-Town of Blacksburg
	Michael Sutphin	-Town of Blacksburg
	Richard Ballengee	-Town of Christiansburg
	Rob Cary	-VDoT
	David Clarke	-VDoT
	Michael Gray	-VDoT
	Tommy DiGiulian	-VDoT
	Kevin Byrd	-NRV Planning District Commission
	Chris Arabia	-VA Department of Rail and Public Transportation
	Jim Quesenberry	-Radford University
	Jim Hurt	-City of Radford
	Debby Freed	-VA Tech
	Deborah Swetnam	-Blacksburg Transit
	Ranny O'Dell	-Pulaski County
	Dan Brugh	-NRV MPO
	Randal Gwinn	-Recording Secretary
ABSENT:	Tony Cho	-Federal Transit Administration-Region 111
	Tammye Davis	-FHWA
	Adam Carpenetti	-Town of Christiansburg
	Becky Martin	-Blacksburg Transit
	Steve Mouras	-Virginia Tech
	Fritz Streff	-New River Community College
	Michael St. Jean	-VA Tech/Montgomery Regional Airport Authority
	Bruce Brown	-City of Radford
	Pete Huber	-Pulaski County
	Richard Alvarez	-Radford University
	Josh Baker	-Radford Transit
	Gary Heinline	-Pulaski Transit

**DECLARATION OF QUORUM AND CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Craig Meadows declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 2 P.M.

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Craig asked for comments on the proposed agenda. Hearing none he called for a motion to approve the agenda.

**On a motion by Richard Ballengee seconded by Anne McClung and carried unanimously, the agenda dated March 7, 2013 was approved.**

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 6, 2012 MEETING**

Craig asked for comments on or corrections to the meeting minutes from the November 1, 2012 Policy Board meeting. One minor change was suggested and noted. Craig then called for a motion to approve the minutes with the correction noted.

**On a motion by Anne McClung, seconded by Michael Sutphin and carried unanimously, the minutes dated November 1, 2012 were approved.**

## **PUBLIC ADDRESS**

There were no public speakers seeking to address the Board.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

There were no items of old business needing discussion.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. I-81 Exit 118 Park & Ride Lot**

Craig offered opening remarks on the problems stemming from the close proximity of the Exit 118 Park & Ride lot to the Falling Branch Elementary School. Both the Park & Ride lot and Megabus are viewed as assets to the community and a number of meetings have been held to discuss the issues with participants from Montgomery County, VDoT, the Town of Christiansburg, Montgomery County Schools and Megabus. In response to complaints filed by the school the Christiansburg Police Department is conducting a risk assessment of the area and VDoT is reviewing with their security consultant what they can do to address the reported problems at the lot.

Rob added that VDoT has already taken action by installing temporary fencing and more signage to inform the public that trespassing on school property will not be tolerated. Future options being discussed with a security consultant include installing additional permanent fencing of an appropriate type and perhaps the placement of a video surveillance camera overlooking the lot. VDoT, having no enforcement capability, is limited to educating the public and cannot police the lot; therefore it may be that we have exhausted our options for addressing the problem.

Craig added that Megabus for one is looking at alternatives and perhaps it's time to identify a more appropriate site for their stop and perhaps the Park & Ride lot as well.

Richard confirmed that the Christiansburg Police are monitoring the area and has placed an officer at the school during the last three weeks and will continue to do so for another month. Unfortunately, despite half a dozen signs warning the public to not trespass on school property, two citations were issued last week. People just ignore the signs it seems. We do anticipate that the situation will get better due to the ongoing efforts to educate the Park & Ride customers and bus riders.

Craig closed the discussion by committing to keep everyone in the loop on future developments as they occur.

#### **B. Development of the 2013-14 Unified Planning work Program (Draft UPWP)**

Dan reported that preparations on this year's UPWP have been delayed due to uncertainty of the PL Fund and Transit Planning Fund allocation amounts for this year. It is anticipated that the final numbers will be available by the March 21<sup>st</sup> TAC meeting. The TAC will then take action on the Draft UPWP and advertise for public comments such that the Policy Board can make final approval in their May 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

#### **C. Transit Operating Funds (5307 Funds)**

Dan reported that Federal Transit funding coming into the MPO must now be split between Blacksburg Transit and Radford Transit due to expansion of the MPO last year. The MPO must decide on the distribution amounts and discussions are ongoing with the two transit agencies to determine the appropriations.

Craig commented that the City of Radford is deeply concerned about the affect this will have on Radford Transit.

#### **D. Virginia Transportation Bill**

Rob reported that VDoT doesn't yet know all the details of the Transportation Bill by the legislature and being reviewed by the Governor's office. Changes can still occur so we are awaiting the final version although the initial impressions are fairly positive. Once the information has been received and reviewed in detail VDoT will probably present a formal presentation of the results.

#### **E. Relocation of the SmartWay bus stop in the Corporate Research Center**

Dan reported that the current SmartWay bus stop at the CRC is out of parking capacity. Blacksburg Transit and Valley Metro have been working on a new location and now are ready to make the move. The TAC has not reviewed this proposal however the SmartWay Advisory Committee has and requests approval by the MPO Policy Board in order for the move to occur. A proposed resolution is included in the meeting packets.

Craig asked for comments on the proposed resolution and hearing none called for a motion to approve.

**Resolution Approving relocation of a SmartWay bus stop in the CRC from the Garvin Building to the Andrews Building**

**On a motion by Michael Sutphin seconded by Richard Ballengee and carried unanimously**

WHEREAS, the current SmartWay stop at the Garvin Building does not have adequate available parking, and

WHEREAS, to meet the needs of the CRC better, and

WHEREAS, a suitable location, including a shelter, bus pull off, and parking are available at the Andrews Building, and

WHEREAS, the SmartWay Advisory Committee has reviewed and endorsed the change,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization approves the requested change of the SmartWay bus stop in the CRC from the Garvin Building to the Andrews Building.

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J. Dan Brugh, Executive Director

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

VDOT Project Report

Rob gave an update on the projects currently underway or being readied in the area. Handouts with information on the Rt. 11/ 460 and Rt. 8 planning studies were distributed to the group in case they needed to respond to citizen questions concerning them. A recently completed project was the deck overlay on the bridge over I-81 at Den Hill Road which was finished last August. Projects under construction at this time include the I-81 truck climbing lanes targeted for completion in November of this year, the Rt. 114 project in Christiansburg slated for completion in the fall of 2014, the Peppers Ferry New River Bridge replacement which should be completed in November of 2014 and the Rt. 61 bridge replacement in Narrows which is hoped to be finished in the fall of this year. Upcoming projects include the South Gate Interchange on Rt. 460 which will get started in the spring of 2015 with completion slated for the spring of 2017, changes to Research Center Drive in Blacksburg which will start in the spring of 2014 and finish in the fall of 2014, replacement of the I-81 bridges over the New River and the Rt. 232 bridge

over I-81 near Radford which should start in the spring of 2016 and hopefully be completed by the fall of 2019, the I-81 bridge replacements over Rt. 8 outside of Christiansburg which is slated for starting in the spring of 2018 and completion in the fall of 2019, the Rt. 603 Connector from I-81 to the Intermodal facility slated for startup in the spring of 2014 with completion planned in the fall of 2015, a safety project on Rt. 669 off Rt. 8 in Riner which will be done between the spring and fall of 2016 and a Tier 2 environmental impact study on the I-81 corridor between 581 in Roanoke and exit 118 in Christiansburg slated for completion this summer.

A brief discussion of the I-81 bridge replacement over Rt. 8 occurred as it is considered a hot spot within the MPO due to traffic congestion on the ramps and the existence of an ad hoc park & ride lot on the east side of bridges. Rob reported that the project is currently programmed as an interstate bridge replacement however VDoT is keenly aware of the other issues and is hoping to find funding to address them as well.

Craig also asked when it is anticipated that the work on West Main Street in Salem will be completed. Rob replied that the pace of work has been impacted by traffic rerouted during the construction of the I-81 truck climbing lanes however it is hoped that the work in Salem will be completed in six to eight months.

#### MPO Bike Plan Update

Kevin reported on the NRVPCDC's work on a MPO Bike Plan. The project kickoff meeting occurred on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February and the data collection phase is currently underway. A website is under construction that will allow interested parties to follow the progress of the project and submit feedback. Thus far the project is progressing on schedule with the next meeting anticipated for some time in May.

#### Livability Project Update

Kevin reported on the progress of the Livability study. We are now approaching the last phase of the project. We are now testing a web application called Crowd Gauge for use in soliciting input from interested parties and appraising their response to various strategies. Once we decide on how to reach those in the community who don't have access to a computer we hope to start using the tool in the April / May timeframe. A leadership forum will be held probably in late June at the Radford University campus. A draft plan is expected by October and wrap up of the project in December of 2013.

#### SmartWay Bus update

Dan reported that the SmartWay bus ridership numbers have been variable during the first two quarters and Valley Metro is attempting to identify the cause. Overall ridership continues to be good, just not as predictable as usual.

### Ride Solutions update

Dan reported that Christy at the PDC continues to do a good job with the Ride Solutions program and Rideshare partnerships continue to increase.

Kevin added that he and Christy are interested in identifying new businesses to add to their contact list and asked the group to send suggestions for those they feel would make good candidates.

### Blacksburg Transit update

Debbie commented that due to VA Tech observing spring break week Blacksburg Transit doesn't have anything unusual to report.

### Radford Transit Update

Radford Transit services continue to do well with current ridership numbers trending 75% above those for the same time period last year. Two new and two refurbished buses (larger) will be going into service in the near future which will continue to improve the service provided.

### Park & Ride Study Update

Dan commented that the Park & Ride study performed in 2008 by Ride Solutions needs to be updated and the NRVPCDC has agreed to perform the work.

Kevin stated that the NRVPCDC hopes to start work on the update in July of next year.

Rob asked how far the study would extend as VDoT has an interest in the data gathered. Kevin replied that initially it would include the four counties in the New River Valley, Pulaski, Floyd, Giles and Montgomery County along with the City of Radford. Most of the Planning Districts have a rural transportation program which is pretty broad in scope. If VDoT is interested in the results then perhaps Rob should request on behalf of VDoT to have the Planning Districts include studies for the Park & Rides in their rural transportation programs.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no other items of business discussed.

### **NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING**

The next scheduled meeting is April 4, 2013 at 2:00 pm in the Montgomery County Government Center.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further agenda items to discuss, Craig called for a motion to adjourn the meeting

**On a motion by Anne McClung seconded by Richard Ballengee and carried unanimously the meeting was adjourned at 2:51 PM**

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

**Craig Meadows, Chairman**