

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

**Minutes**

**January 7, 2016**

**MEMBERS**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Craig Meadows	-Montgomery County
	Anne McClung	-Town of Blacksburg
	Michael Sutphin	-Town of Blacksburg
	Michael Barber	-Town of Christiansburg
	Adam Carpenetti	-Town of Christiansburg
	Basil Edwards	-City of Radford
	Bruce Brown	-City of Radford
	Danny Wilson	-Pulaski County
	Kevin Byrd	-NRVRC
	Jay Lindsey	-DRPT
	Michael Gray	-VDoT
	Tommy DiGiulian	-VDoT
	Steve Mouras	-Virginia Tech
	James Perkins	-Radford University
	Tom Fox	-Blacksburg Transit
	Brian Booth	-Radford Transit
	Monica Musick	-Pulaski Transit
	Dan Brugh	-NRV MPO
	Randal Gwinn	-Recording Secretary
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Ken King	-VDoT
	Tammye Davis	-FHWA
	Ranny O'Dell	-Pulaski County
	Annette Perkins	-Montgomery County
	Fritz Streff	-New River Community College
	Tony Cho	-Federal Transit Administration-Region 111
	Michael St. Jean	-VA Tech/Montgomery Regional Airport Authority
<b>OTHERS</b>		
<b>PRESENT:</b>	David Clarke	-VDoT
	Eli Sharp	-NRVRC
	Jeri Baker	-VA Tech
	Tyler Humphreys	-Radford Transit
	Emily Gibson	-Montgomery County

## **DECLARATION OF QUORUM AND CALL TO ORDER**

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

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Craig asked for comments on the proposed agenda with the one addendum added to it just before meeting time. Hearing none, he asked to hear a motion for approval of the agenda.

**On a motion by Anne McClung seconded by Danny Wilson and carried unanimously, the proposed meeting agenda with the addendum was approved.**

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 5, 2015 MEETING**

Craig asked for comments on or corrections to the meeting minutes from the November 5, 2015 Policy Board meeting. Hearing none he then called for a motion to approve the minutes.

**On a motion by Michael Barber seconded by Bruce Brown and carried unanimously, the minutes dated November 5, 2015 were approved.**

## **PUBLIC ADDRESS**

There were no citizens wishing to address the group.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

There were no items of old business needing addressed.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Approval of the BT Bus Stop Safety and Accessibility Study**

Dan Brugh gave a brief summary of the study's purpose which was to identify and prioritize potential improvements to the bus stops in the Town of Blacksburg served by Blacksburg Transit. Completed in July of 2015 the study was conducted by the MPO at BT's request and resulted in recommendations for the top twenty stops identified as needing improvements.

Anne McClung commented that the Town of Blacksburg would find the study results very useful in coordinating other types of improvements being planned in the areas where these bus stops are located.

Dan closed his comments by commenting that the study was well done and will be beneficial to Blacksburg and BT. The MPO will conduct similar studies on campus for VA Tech and within the City of Radford should they desire to do so in the future. A suggested resolution of acceptance has been included in the meeting materials.

There was no discussion on the study and Craig asked to hear a motion for acceptance of the study.

**On a motion by Michael Barber seconded by Michael Sutphin and carried unanimously, the resolution to accept the BT Bus Stop Safety and Accessibility Study was approved and follows in its entirety:**

***New River Valley  
Metropolitan Planning Organization***

***January 7, 2016***

**Resolution to accept the final report on the Bus Stop Safety and Accessibility Study for the Town of Blacksburg.**

**On a motion by Michael Barber seconded by Michael Sutphin and carried unanimously,**

WHEREAS, the Town of Blacksburg requested the NRV MPO to conduct a study to evaluate bus stops in the Town and develop a prioritization tool in order to efficiently program improvements to bus stops; and

WHEREAS, the NRV MPO approved conducting the study and utilized a VDRPT On Call Consultant, Kimley Horn, to conduct the study, and

WHEREAS, the study is completed and the TAC recommends acceptance.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that:

The New River Valley MPO Policy Board accepts the final report of the Bus Stop Safety and Accessibility Study for the Town of Blacksburg.

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**F. Craig Meadows, Chairman**

**Approval of the Passenger Rail Study**

Kevin Byrd and Eli Sharp presented a PowerPoint slideshow that summarized the Passenger Rail Study. Kevin focused on the history of the two year study effort and credited those who participated as well as pointing out that ridership predictions based on the public surveys conducted reveal that the NRV ridership should easily exceed the annual forty thousand trip threshold set by Amtrak.

Eli covered the site selection process used to narrow down the twenty-nine possible locations to a final recommendation that the station be built in Christiansburg. Two possible sites were identified in Christiansburg, either of which qualifies for a Category Three Caretaker Station which would be unstaffed.

Following the presentation a brief discussion concerning how the study was conducted, how the localities may share the cost of building and maintaining the station, the possibility of staffing the station and Norfolk Southern's role in the future efforts to bring passenger service to the NRV. The question of which one of the Christiansburg sites will be chosen for a station was addressed by deciding to await completion of future steps in the overall process, as a decision is not necessary at this time.

Discussions having ended Kevin asked for the Policy Board's approval of the study so that work can begin on the next step in the process, the pursuit of an operational analysis.

Craig then asked to hear a motion on the suggestion resolution included in the meeting packet.

**On a motion by Michael Barber seconded by Anne McClung and carried with one abstention, the suggested resolution to accept the Passenger Rail Study was approved and follows in its entirety:**

***New River Valley  
Metropolitan Planning Organization***

***January 7, 2016***

**Resolution to approve the Passenger Rail Study for possible extension from Roanoke to the New River Valley.**

**On a motion by Michael Barber seconded by Anne McClung and carried with one abstention,**

WHEREAS, the New River Valley Passenger Rail Committee through the New River Valley Regional Commission (NRVRC) requested the MPO to conduct a study for possible extension of passenger rail from Roanoke to the New River Valley; and

WHEREAS, VDRPT concurred that this study could be done by the MPO using FTA 5303 planning funds, and

WHEREAS, the MPO approved conducting this study at its August 7, 2014 meeting, and

WHEREAS, the NRV RC conducted this study for the MPO to determine the potential ridership as well as a preferred station location, and

WHEREAS, the study has been completed,

WHEREAS, the TAC has reviewed and recommends approval.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that:

The New River Valley MPO Policy Board approves the final report of the New River Valley Passenger Rail Study and recommends that one of the Christiansburg sites be the location of the rail station.

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**F. Craig Meadows, Chairman**

## ADDENDUM

### **Request to VDRPT to fund a Rail Traffic Modeling Study for an extension of passenger rail from Roanoke to the New River Valley**

Dan reported that this addendum is the result of a recent message received from DRPT with a request for the MPO to submit an application for funding of a Rail Traffic Modeling Study through the Intercity Passenger Rail Operating and Capital Fund which is administered by DRPT. The application will need to be submitted by February 1, 2016 in order to get into the next funding cycle. This would be a joint application from the NRV MPO and the NRVRC and there will be no local match requirement. We were also encouraged to speak with the Bristol VA MPO to explore the possibility of teaming with them to request that this modelling study cover the entire Roanoke, VA to Bristol, VA route as DRPT feels that it would offer a cost savings to do one study in two phases rather than pursue two separate studies. The Roanoke to New River Valley portion would be phase one of the study as we are already at the second step in the process. We will be speaking with Bristol by phone next week however at this time we need to continue with applying for our own funding. Hopefully Bristol will do the same and then DRPT can coordinate with Norfolk Southern on which approach to take.

Jay Lindsey commented that DRPT requires no local match for these requests however it is competitive arena and they do take offers of local matches into consideration when reviewing applications. Therefore it would be good to keep in mind that your application will be amongst other applications from other people who may be offering a local match. Typically those local match offers we see are in the range of 30%.

Kevin next reported that a lobbyist, David Bailey, has been engaged by the steering committee to represent this project in Richmond. David has already been at work and will be meeting next Monday with Secretary Lane to discuss the project. A lot of pieces have to fall into place to make this project happen and filling this application for IPROC funding is strongly encouraged.

Bruce asked Jay for a ballpark figure on what a decent local match would be and Jay responded that the cost of the study would be \$330k so a 30% local match would be in the range of \$100k if the MPO were to consider offering one. Jay reiterated for the record that DRPT has no requirement for a local match on these applications.

Dan then updated the figures to \$350k for the study and \$125k for the local match based on advice he recently received from Jeremy at DRPT.

Anne asked Jay if there is any difference amongst the applicants of who offers local matches such as urban areas versus rural areas or larger communities versus small communities. Is the expectation the same or does it change based on the size of and type of area. Jay replied that he would attempt to find the answer to the question and send it to Dan along with the scoring criteria used when processing these applications.

Bruce, Kevin, and Mike Barber spoke in favor of joining forces with Bristol on this study due to the added weight and experience that they would bring to the table.

Discussions on the topic having ended, Craig asked to hear a motion on the suggested resolution to apply to DRPT for funding of the Rail Traffic Modeling Study.

**On a motion by Anne McClung seconded by Bruce Brown and carried unanimously, the suggested resolution to apply to DRPT for funding of a Rail Traffic Control Modeling Study was approved and follows in its entirety:**

*New River Valley  
Metropolitan Planning Organization*

*January 7, 2016*

*Application for funding through the Intercity Passenger Rail Operating and Capital (IPROC) Fund for a Rail Traffic Control Modeling Study for an extension of Passenger Rail from Roanoke to the New River Valley.*

**On a motion by Anne McClung, seconded by Bruce Brown, and carried unanimously,**

WHEREAS, the New River Valley MPO desires to file an application with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation for funding to conduct a Rail Traffic Control Modeling Study for an extension of passenger rail from Roanoke to the New River Valley; and

WHEREAS, the NRV MPO estimates that this project will cost \$ 350,000; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly, through enactment of the Intercity Passenger Rail Operating and Capital (IPROC) Fund, provides for funding for certain improvements and operation of intercity passenger rail in the Commonwealth of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, passenger rail would be an important element of the New River Valley MPO's transportation system providing another option for travel to and from the northeast corridor; and

WHEREAS, passenger rail is instrumental to the economic development of the area, and provides relief to the highway system by providing an alternate means of transporting passengers; and

WHEREAS, the New River Valley MPO supports extension of passenger rail and operation of rail service; and

WHEREAS, the NRV MPO has conducted a study demonstrating demand and has also selected a site for the station in the New River Valley, and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth Transportation Board has established procedures for all allocation and distribution of the funds provided.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the New River Valley MPO does hereby request the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation to give priority consideration to funding the Rail Traffic Modeling Study needed for possible extension of passenger rail from Roanoke to the New River Valley for inclusion in the projects funded in the Intercity Passenger Rail Operating and Capital Fund.

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F. Craig Meadows, Chairman

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT**

### **VDOT Project Update**

Tommy DiGiulian reported on a variety of VDOT projects:

The Southgate Interchange project is progressing well and the roundabout may be in place sometime this summer if all goes well.

The Route 603 project has about half of the excavation completed. It is hoped that the road will be reopened in the spring and the entire project completed in the summer.

The Route 600 project should be done in July or August.

The new Exit 118 Park and Ride project was advertised in December and we should see activity starting in the spring.

The North bound I-81 New River Bridge near Radford may go to advertisement in June if the remaining budget shortfall gets resolved.

The CTB report on the ranking of HB2 project applications should be available in two weeks. This will only reveal the scores, it will still take several months to finalize the final list of projects. The six year program will be adopted in June so there will be several meetings of the CTB to work on this before then.

### **Route 11 in Fairlawn Study Update**

Dan reported that all the work on the study has been completed and the recommendations have been reviewed by Pulaski County and will go to the TAC at their next meeting. Approval of the Policy Board will be sought at their next meeting.

### **Transit Planning Projects update**

Eli reported on the status of the Regional Transit Study. The online survey is progressing well with 800 responses having been received thus far. In person surveys are about to begin and we hope to have a draft report prepared in March.

Dan reported on the status of the Regional GIS Transit Portal project. This year Erik is having the BT GIS Intern work with the areas Transit Providers to update the data used to produce the web site.

Dan also reported on the progress of the Regional Transit Development Plan. Each of the Transit Providers has to periodically update their Transit Development Plan and Erik suggested doing all three at the same time using the same consultant as this would offer a cost savings and also give more consistent results. We'll be working with DRPT going forward to explore the option.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Bruce asked if there was a regional GIS map for the New River Valley Trails or if one could be produced for distribution to tourists coming into the area to use to locate these resources. Kevin responded that area Tourism Agencies have developed a map called the New River Valley Trail Guide posted online and the Regional Commission has an interactive Cycling Trail map completed and available online. There is also an interactive Trail Guide map in the works. Kevin will provide Dan with links to these resources to distribute.

**NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING**

Craig announced that the next scheduled meeting is February 4, 2016 at 2:00 PM in the Montgomery County Government Center.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further agenda items to discuss, Craig adjourned the meeting at 3:10 PM.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

**F. Craig Meadows, Chairman**