



**NEW RIVER VALLEY TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Meeting Minutes**

November 15, 2011 1:30 p.m.

New River Valley Competitiveness Center  
Fairlawn

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairperson Steven Sandy, Vice Chairperson Erik Olsen, James Hurt, Dan Brugh, Karen Drake, Adam Carpenetti, Fritz Streff, Mike Dunn, Mike Grega, Tammy Trimble, Michael Gray, David Clarke

**GUESTS PRESENT:** None

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Shawn Utt, Lydeana Martin, Richard McCoy, Howard Spencer, Buddy Cast, Rick Tawney, Bill Parker, Bill Pedigo, Roy Saville, Gary Heinline

**CALL TO ORDER** .....Chair Sandy  
The meeting was called to order at 1:32 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES** .....Chair Sandy  
The September meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**.....Open Floor  
There were no public comments.

**COMMITTEE MEMBER CONCERNS** .....Open Floor  
There were no committee member concerns.

**NEW BUSINESS** ..... Open Floor

*1. Local Projects Update:*

Sharp shared that the I-81 bridge replacements over the New River would include Exit 105 improvements in the scope. Approximately 59 people attended the public meeting in September. VDOT continues to work with Montgomery, Radford, and Pulaski through the preliminary engineering phase.

Grega shared that ridership for Radford Transit continued to be successful. Since the report of over 8,000 riders in August, September had around 29,000 and the month of October had around 22,000 riders.

Straight shared that the RIDE Solutions program had significantly grown from 487 participants in 2010 to 1760 participants in 2011. The increase in participants was greatly impacted due to a partnership with Virginia Tech.

Gray shared an update on the I-81 truck climbing lanes blasting schedule. Currently about 1/3 complete, blasting will continue through the Spring of 2012. Blasting will

not be performed on VT game days, holidays, or other days when traffic is anticipated to be greater than usual.

Sandy shared that Route 114 widening near the Christiansburg mall area was expected to begin in mid 2012. The anticipated construction timeline is 2 years and the pedestrian bridge for the Huckleberry Trail will be constructed as the last phase.

Olsen shared that BT started the Montgomery County service for the Warm Hearth Village, retirement community. The service had nearly 15 participants before lunch on the first day (11/15/2011).

2. *Action Item: Regional Transit Organization Study Recommendation:*

Sharp provided a presentation on the study and responded to Members questions. On a motion by Olsen, and second by Carpenetti, the TAC recommended that the study be presented to the Commission for approval, pending the following adjustments: (1) a date be placed on the cover of the study; (2) the Warm Hearth Service be added as a new service and language removed depicting the service as future; (3) Radford University be added to the stakeholder list as invited, but unable to attend; (4) additional information be provided on Table 3, in Section 5.1, clarifying the intended use and inclusion of towns. The motion passed unanimously.

3. *Rural Work Program Tasks:*

Sharp asked for input on approaching tasks identified in the Rural Transportation Work Program: Prioritization of the RLRP recommendations: (1) by Jurisdiction, (2) by Region and identify funding strategies; identify CoSS that would be a candidate for further study (81, 460, 58); coordinate a day ride to inventory major roads with VDOT, PDC, and local staff.

4. *Summary of VDOT Regulatory Changes:*

A Summary of the Proposed Major Regulatory Changes, Chapter 870, was distributed to the TAC.

5. *PDC Hosting VDOT Program Overview Session:*

VDOT is working with the PDC to formalize a workshop and date.

**STAFF REPORTS .....PDC Staff**

1. *Regional Bikeway, Walkway, Blueway Plan Update:*

- Dublin, Christiansburg, Town of Pulaski, Radford, and Floyd County have endorsed the plan.
- Pulaski County, Town of Floyd, Pearisburg, Giles, and Montgomery are expected to endorse soon.
- A presentation was provided to the Giles Council of Governments (5 towns).

## 2. *Transportation Staff Report:*

### *Livability Project Update:*

- Work Groups for each of the 10 elements are underway (June 2012)
- Late Summer/early Fall a larger group, consisting of representatives from each element area, will begin to meet.
- Late Summer/ early Fall a second public summit will be scheduled
- Transportation Work Group:
  - Concentrating on 1 element per meeting
  - November meeting focused on housing
  - Participants examined public input on the two elements
  - Affordability was among the top concerns for both elements

### *Transportation Enhancement Workshop:*

- Most States require cash match – VA is unique to offer in-kind services as match
- Not billing every 90 days can land your project on the “Dormant List” – Feds start wanting money back
- No reimbursement for overhead items
- Professional services should be billed at actual cost – exclude profit mark-ups
- Financial system changing in December – requests after October will not be processed until new system is up
- If land is donated (as in-kind) only the project footprint value can be allocated towards the reimbursement
- Secretary of Transportation makes the call on Open Container Funds - \$4 Million allocated towards Roanoke Greenway

### *Executive Business Series:*

- Topic: Air, Rail, and Interstate: Transportation at a Crossroads
- Julie Newman, Blue Ridge PBS, moderated the session
- Expert Panel included: David Foster, Ray Pethtel, Jacqueline Shuck, and Wayne Strickland
- Major take away points:
  - VA gas tax is 17.5 cents/gallon – NC is about 15 cents higher
  - Converting gas tax to a % of purchase may address inflation
  - 7.5% would yield the same amount of funding based on current gas prices

### *I-81 Corridor Coalition:*

- Once Panama Canal opens – truck traffic will reduce on the west coast in order to avoid the Rocky Mountains
- If 33% cut in Transportation program occurs VA, currently receiving \$943M, will lose \$334M
- How do you shift transportation priorities from urban mobility to moving freight?
- I-81 has a significant amount of long-haul freight
- Only 7% increase in lane miles from 1980 – 2008
- 74% of US population is within the Norfolk Southern service area
- 500-1500 miles is the “sweet spot” for intermodal freight hubs (according to NS data)
- 40% of every dollar earned is reinvested into infrastructure (at NS)

Upcoming Events:

- Livability Transportation Work Group (Dec. 1st)
- Virginia Freight Transportation Summit (Dec. 6th)
- Governor's Transportation Conference (Dec. 7th-9th)
- Vtrans 2035 Regional Forum (Dec. 14th)

**OTHER BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.....Committee**

1. *January 2012 – Elections for TAC Chair & Vice Chair positions.*
2. *Meeting Schedule will remain the same through 2012*

**ADJOURNMENT.....Chair Sandy**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:38 p.m.