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**MPO Policy Board**  
Minutes: May 27, 2020  
DRAFT

**Committee – Voting Members**

Ann Mallek, *Albemarle County*  
John Lynch, *VDOT – Culpeper District*  
Michael Payne, *City of Charlottesville*  
Lloyd Snook, *City of Charlottesville (absent)*  
Ned Gallaway, *Albemarle County*

**Staff**

Sandy Shackelford, *TJPDC*  
Gretchen Thomas, *TJPDC*  
Jessica Hersh-Ballering, *TJPDC*  
Chip Boyles, *TJPDC*  
Lucinda Shannon, *TJPDC*  
Sara Pennington, *Rideshare/TJPDC*

**Non-Voting & Alternates**

Brad Sheffield, *JAUNT*  
Karen Davis, *JAUNT (absent)*  
Chuck Proctor, *VDOT-Culpeper District*  
Stacy Londry, *VDOT – Culpeper District*  
Hal Jones, *VDOT – Culpeper District (absent)*  
Julia Monteith, *UVA Office of the Architect*  
Garland Williams, *CAT (absent)*  
Juwhan Lee, *CAT*

Dan Butch, *Albemarle County (absent)*  
Wood Hudson, *DRPT*  
Tony Cho, *FTA (absent)*  
Travis Pietila, *CTAC (absent)*  
Mack Frost, *FHWA (absent)*

**Call to Order:**

Ms. Mallek called the virtual meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

Ms. Mallek read a legal preamble to the meeting allowing the MPO Policy Board to meet electronically.

Ms. Shannon performed a roll call.

**Matters from the Public:**

Bill Emory, resident of the City of Charlottesville for 49 years. He said that it is important when considering changes to the bike/ped infrastructure, it is important to “build it once, build it right and build it beautiful.” He mentioned the Rivanna and Saunders trails as examples. While he appreciates the increase in bike/ped focus, he says there are better ways to make connections to Monticello mountain. Regarding the process of selecting the Route 20 SUP as a candidate for Smartscale funding, the process was legal but it was not transparent. He respectfully requested that the MPO defer the selection of the median as a candidate for Smartscale this year.

Paul Josey, former chair of the Charlottesville Tree Commission from 2016-2019, said in 2009 the Secretary of Transportation designated the Route 20 stretch as part of the National Scenic Byway for the Journey Through Hallowed Ground that connects Gettysburg to Monticello. He said there are 80 memorial trees in honor of fallen soldiers in the median on route to Monticello. He said he was surprised to see the PEC had pushed through the project because the bike path

would remove the nearly all of those trees. He also noted that the project was based on a graduate school thesis paper and did not include a public process at all. He asked the committee to reject the design as proposed for Smartscale funding and that other options be considered using existing utilities, grading all while preserving the existing memorial trees. He also said the vision on Grady and Preston Avenue is very narrow-minded and should consider a much bigger vision for Preston Avenue.

Chris Henry spoke about Item 10 on the agenda regarding Smartscale round 4 projects. He has submitted a letter of concern from Dairy Central. He represents the owners of that property through Stoneypoint Development Group. He mentioned that there has been no community engagement on the solution. He said they have done an engineering study at the site and there have been some technical concerns with the proposed plan that have not been addressed. The proposed changes will increase travel time through the intersection, increase pollution and congestion, and decrease pedestrian safety. Three comp plans in the past 20 years in the City of Charlottesville, dating back to 2000, have called for a wholistic small area plan for the Preston Avenue corridor, but none has been done. Four small area plans have been done and all integrated into land use with transportation planning and design in the region that would be included in the Cville Plans Together comp plan update. It would recommend that a similar approach be taken for the Preston Avenue corridor, and specifically the Preston and Grady and Preston and 10<sup>th</sup> intersection. There is a need to robustly engage the community about the problems and solutions keeping best practices in mind, such as improved pedestrian safety and pedestrian experience overall, not just traffic experience and what a traffic engineer might show as a safe way. There needs to be planning for and design of land use and transportation simultaneously, not solely transportation. And, there needs to be enhanced access by creating solutions through and between the three adjacent neighborhoods. We respectfully request that the City remove the Smartscale application and work towards a small area plan that could incorporate a greater vision for this corridor and for this intersection.

Peter Krebs, with the Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC), said it is important to be clear that the Route 20 project is not a PEC project. This is a VDOT project, not the PEC. Secondly, he said he is the graduate student who created the study. He said what his study did was asked if it was feasible or desirable to connect from Charlottesville to Monticello. They discovered that it is feasible. They looked at a couple of routes broadly. They looked at a tunnel connecting Old Monticello Road. They looked at the idea on Route 20. They looked at following the south side of I-64. They also looked at a solution that would go through PVCC's grounds. The stakeholders who worked on that report with them, VDOT, City, County, TJPDC, looked at the recommendations and they decided to explore further the idea of connecting along Route 20. The idea of going down the median is not anyone's preferred option, but it is the one option that could be achieved within a generation. He said they are just beginning this process and agreed that robust community engagement is important and hopes to work together to find a solution that works for everyone. Not doing anything is a missed opportunity. It means keeping the World Heritage Site in two separate, inaccessible places. It means that those who goes to PVCC and don't have a car or can't get the bus are out of luck. It means the southern part of the county is cut off from the region. It also means that you have to drive a car to take a walk at the Saunders Monticello Trail. He said a solution can be found if everyone put their minds together to figure it out.

Robin Hanes said her concern is that Peter Krebs and Jessica Hersh-Ballering will be communications and outreach between tree experts and those who care about them and those

who are creating the proposal and there has been no communication so far. She said they are not believing that you are able to compromise this proposal.

Kathy Nepote said the problem with the bike path on Route 20 is that it has no elevation provided in the project design. As such, you have no picture of how the installation impacts the trees in the median. If you clearly look at it, the trees will be buried from anywhere from 1 – 4 feet. This will severely damage the trees. Therefore, she doesn't see how there could be a bike path with trees along it which would be what everyone would like to have. It is difficult to see how the bike path, the median and the ditch in the median could coexist.

Ms. Shannon read Barbara's (no last name provided) comments she left in the group chat. Here is how they read: "I am very concerned about the proposed destruction of the trees that were planted as a memorial in the Monticello gateway for the purpose of a bike path that would be very dangerous for most people to use. VDOT participated in the development of the Monticello Gateway Memorial tree planting and gave approval for it, as well as the US Forest Service."

Dorothy Smith speaking for the Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards along with the Charlottesville Tree Commission and many partners including Journey Through Hallowed Ground. We created the Monticello Gateway, which is a massive tree planting five years ago. At some point in the future, that project will be a fabulous welcoming to Charlottesville indicating Charlottesville's interest in trees. Unfortunately, none of the experts on our Board of Directors can see how a 10-foot path could be put down the center of that median and still preserve those trees. By the time the project moves forward, the trees will be 16 years old. To move them is not feasible. This is a massive public project that started five years ago that looks to be on the way to being destroyed. I really don't see a lady with her child in a baby carriage going down the center of that median with cars going past on either side at 60 miles per hour, much less someone in a wheelchair. It seems that this is for bike people only and I really can't see that it can co-exist with the tree planting that is already there.

Mr. Boyles said that Supervisor Price has written an email in regarding the bike/ped project, understanding the concerns and that her statement should be part of the comment record.

**Response to Matters from the Public:**

None.

**Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Public Hearing**

Ms. Shackelford explained the UPWP and that it is a summary document on how the funds from FHWA and FTA will be spent on transportation projects.

Mr. Gallaway asked about online resources for \$8K and primers for \$20K.

Ms. Shackelford said there will be training for internal staff and committee members to include technical jargon and explaining it in layman's terms. That information will be turned into online resources and explain how and when to engage.

Ms. Mallek said explaining the technical information to the general public was the primary goal of CHART, now the Citizens Transportation Action Committee (CTAC), from 2000-2008. She suggested that staff go back in the notes from CHART so as not to "reinvent the wheel."

Ms. Shackelford said staff will continually look for ways to update the information in the UPWP.

Ms. Mallek opened the public hearing.

There were no comments from the public.

Ms. Mallek closed the public hearing.

### **Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) Public Hearing**

Ms. Shannon explained what the 2021-2024 TIP is and why it is required.

Ms. Mallek opened the public hearing.

Mr. Hudson, with DRPT, said regarding the transit portion of the TIP, that as the funding situation continues to evolved due to COVID 19, there will be changes in the FY21 TIP blocks for CAT and JAUNT sections. He explained that once DRPT has better data from their resources, they will have a better idea about numbers.

Ms. Shannon said the TIP will be continually updated.

Ms. Mallek closed the public hearing.

### **Review and Acceptance of the Agenda:**

Mr. Gallaway made a motion to accept the agenda. Ms. Mallek seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

Mr. Gallaway noted that he was at the July 24 meeting and he was marked absent. That needs to be changed. He made a motion to approve the minutes with that change. Mr. Lynch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Mallek made a motion to approve the January 22 meeting minutes and Mr. Lynch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Gallaway made a motion to approve the March 25 meeting minutes and Ms. Mallek seconded. The motion passed with Mr. Lynch abstaining.

### **Selection of Policy Board Officers**

Ms. Mallek made a motion to nominate Michael Payne as Chair and Mr. Gallaway seconded the motion. Mr. Gallaway made a motion to nominate Ann Mallek as Vice Chair and Mr. Payne seconded the motion. Both motions were approved unanimously.

### **CTAC Membership**

Ms. Hersh-Ballering said she received a self-nomination from Travis Pietela who had previously been representing the City. His term was up and had moved from the City and wants to serve as the MPO representative.

Ms. Mallek moved to nominate Travis Pietela to the CTAC as the MPO representative. Mr. Gallaway seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously.

### **2021 UPWP Review and Approve**

Ms. Shackelford mentioned that staff presented the UPWP to the MPO Technical committee and they made a recommendation to approve.

Mr. Gallaway made a motion to approve the UPWP. Mr. Lynch seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

### **2021-2024 TIP Review and Approve**

Mr. Gallaway made a motion to approve the TIP. Ms. Mallek seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Smartscale Round 4 Projects**

Ms. Shannon reviewed and discussed the proposed project for the MPO area. She has received over 250 comments on the projects so far and the public comment period is open until the end of the month.

Ms. Mallek asked about the timetable for public discussions and what formal means are available to the public for them to comment.

Jeanette Janiczek from the City said that they are planning to hold a meeting on the City's 360 program on public access television for the Preston/Grady project. There will be a conversation with the City manager and staff at that meeting.

Kevin McDermott said the County was planning to make a Smartscale presentation at a public hearing prior to COVID-19 that has now been delayed. There is going to be discussion at the Board of Supervisors meeting on June 17. Mr. McDermott said he would be presenting on all the projects at that time. The public can speak at the beginning of that meeting.

Ms. Mallek said that public comment could come before or at the end of the meeting. The Board of Supervisors will move forward with voting in July.

Mr. Payne requested that the City staff present to the Council before voting.

Ms. Janiczek said the City needs to provide a resolution of support by August 3.

Ms. Mallek said that the City staff should present to Council prior to the next Policy Board meeting so they can get a resolution of support completed.

### **Staff Updates**

Ms. Shannon noted that there is a memo in the agenda pack re: a TIP adjustment. It is just a reallocation of money. She said that nothing has changed in the project, the numbers have just been adjusted.

### **Items Added to the Agenda**

None.

### **Additional Matters from the Public**

None.

Ms. Hersh-Ballering said there will be a meeting for a stakeholder discussion re: the Route 20 shared Used Path in June. The Tree Stewards and general public are invited to that meeting.

Ms. Mallek adjourned the meeting at 5:26 p.m.