

## Citizen Transportation Advisory Committee Draft Meeting Minutes: July 15, 2020

### **Committee – Voting Members (Present)**

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*Chair* – Tristan Fessell (Albemarle County)

*Vice Chair* - Stuart Gardner (MPO)

Joseph French (City of Charlottesville)

Lucas Beane (City of Charlottesville)

Martin Meth (Albemarle County)

Travis Pietila (MPO)

Tim Keller (Albemarle County – Planning Commission)

Donna Chen (MPO)

Ray Heron (City of Charlottesville)

### **Voting Members (Absent)**

Gary Heaton (City of Charlottesville – Planning Commission)

Vacant (City of Charlottesville)

Vacant (Albemarle County)

Vacant (Albemarle County)

### **Staff (Present)**

Chuck Proctor – VDOT

Ian Baxter – Intern

Jessica Hersh-Ballering – TJPDC/CAMPO

Lucinda Shannon – TJPDC/CAMPO

Sandy Shackelford – TJPDC/CAMPO

### **Call to Order**

The virtual meeting (held on the Zoom platform) was called to order by Chair Tristan Fessell at 7:06pm.

### **Matters from the Public**

There were no matters from the public.

### **Approval of January 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes**

Travis Pietila moved to approve the January 18<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. Martin Meth seconded the motion. Joseph French, Ray Heron, and Lucas Beane abstained from the vote because they were not in attendance at the January meeting. The rest of the committee voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

### **May 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting Summary**

There was not a quorum of voting members in attendance at this meeting. As such, a summary of the meeting content was prepared in lieu of minutes.

## **MPO Transportation “One-pagers” – Ian Baxter**

Ian Baxter, a UVA graduate student who is working at the TJPDC/CAMPO as an intern this summer, presented on a series of informational “one-pagers” or “primers” he created to succinctly summarize and explain the purpose and work of different aspects of the MPO’s transportation initiatives. Committee members had received a first draft of these in the CTAC meeting packets, and Ian showed colorized/stylized versions. Ian asked for feedback from the committee.

Sandy Shackelford briefly spoke to situate this “primer” project within the TJPDC/CAMPO’s goals to improve public outreach. Primarily, these primers are intended to be a piece of our efforts to reduce the barriers to understanding our planning documents and participating in our committees – and thus the regional planning process. She stated that copies of these primers would be available on the website and included in orientation packets for new committee members, as well as other strategic places.

Joseph French noted that he felt these draft primers were the perfect introduction for him to CTAC, but he had a strong education background and personal experience with committees and local government, and he noted that people without that background or experience might find the density and breadth of these documents to be less useful. He specifically mentioned an acquaintance at the Legal Aid Justice Center who might be available to help simplify the documents and prioritize the most relevant information to underserved populations.

Travis Pietila commented specifically on the CTAC primer and the section summarizing how it is staffed, asking that it include “members of the public.” And, on the following page, Travis noted a correction needed on the third bullet point regarding the process of appointing CTAC membership.

Martin Meth asked if there was an even shorter, “Cliff note” version of the primers. Martin also noted that additional nuance needed to be added to one of the points on the CTAC primer.

Stuart Gardner clarified that the audience for these primers should determine the length and depth of the documents.

Ian added that there had been a discussion about how, as a next step, TJPDC/CAMPO might figure out a way to graphically represent the connections between the committees and projects as a very initial introduction to the TJPDC/CAMPO and it’s work when someone truly knows very little about it.

Tim Keller commented that the most exclusionary part of transportation planning might be the acronyms and so recommended that the acronym be the title of each primer (with the true name written out underneath). Tim also asked if this was reinventing the wheel with the creation of these primers, as other MPOs and PDCs all operate in similar ways and might also be creating similar outreach materials. Sandy said she had not seen anything like it. Tim noted that he may have seen something similar (at least an old-fashioned paper version) created by Fairfax County.

Donna Chen added that she agreed with another committee member that these were very detailed, which was great in some cases, but someone who is just being introduced to these particular concepts might benefit from something more succinct and more graphically-based.

Joseph French clarified that the intention of the committee's comments is not to say that the primers should be "dumbed down" for the general public, but "succinct" and "concise" to empower people to participate in what can be an opaque process.

Tristan noted that if anyone had any additional comments to email Jessica and thanked Ian for his work on the primers.

### **MPO Documents – Lucinda Shannon and Sandy Shackelford**

Sandy Shackelford began with a summary of the MPO's Public Participation Plan. It is a requirement for the MPO to review this standing document regularly, and it was time to update this for this for two main reasons 1) to reflect procedures for electronic meetings and 2) there were some procedures that no longer reflected the MPO's practices.

The Public Participation Plan is an FHWA-required document. As such, staff wanted to ensure that the document met all requirements while leaving flexibility for CAMPO to customize our process to make sense for a specific project or program. Another document (the Communications Plan) will specify the ways in which TJPDC/CAMPO intend to go above and beyond what is required by the Public Participation Plan, but still gives the organizations flexibility.

Sandy clarified that the parts of the Public Participation Plan that have been changed were limited to descriptions of how CAMPO shares information and accessibility for people with disabilities and non-native English speakers. Additional changes described new and better ways of reaching out to historically underserved populations. Furthermore, references to specific people/organizations have been removed to prevent the document from getting outdated too quickly. There is a 45-day comment period on this document per federal regulations.

There were some clarification questions from the committee.

Lucinda Shannon shared information on an amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is basically the "budget" showing how the state is spending federal transportation funding. This amendment adds a little over \$8 million for preventative maintenance and system preservation within FY2020.

Stuart Gardner asked if that \$8 million is new money or if it was transferred from some other project/program. Chuck Proctor clarified that this was essentially new money for the region and was not taken from other local programs (although it may have been taken from another region or state that was not going to spend it). Martin Meth clarified that this amendment was labeled "transportation" but only applied to roads (rather than transit, etc.).

Lucinda Shannon then informed the group that the STIP was available on VDOT's website and it is open for public comment. She noted that it is related to the regional TIP. It is a four-year planning document to show the federal government how the state plans to spend federal funds. Tristan Fessell asked a question about the funding for a specific rail project.

Lucinda Shannon described the FOIA resolution that names TJPDC/CAMPO staff member David Blount as the organizations/ FOIA officer. There was no discussion or vote taken by the committee members.

### **Smart Scale updates – Chuck Proctor, VDOT and Lucinda Shannon**

Lucinda Shannon reviewed the basics of Smart Scale funding and the restrictions on who can apply for this funding source and how many projects for which each entity can apply.

Lucinda described two Smart Scale-related resolutions. The first was a resolution by which the MPO Policy board would voice its support for the projects being submitted by the localities within the MPO. The second was a resolution by which the MPO Policy board would voice its support for the projects being submitted by the MPO on behalf of Albemarle County. Lucinda described the public outreach that the MPO has done in regards to these projects and then opened the floor for questions.

Martin Meth asked Chuck Proctor about the next steps for these projects. Chuck summarized by saying that all submitted projects would be ranked based on the Smart Scale's pre-determined scoring process and final decisions would be made by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) next spring. Chuck also reviewed the scoring categories.

Travis Pietila asked if the total amount of funding for Smart Scale remained at about \$500 million or if that was going to be reduced due to COVID. Chuck said the total amount available was dependent on the amount of money projected for next year's (FY2022) budget; as that has not been determined yet, the total amount of money available for Smart Scale has not yet been finalized.

Martin Meth gave some general Smart Scale feedback, saying that people he has talked to who have made comments on projects that were submitted for Smart Scale funding in the pre-application phase feel that their comments have not been taken into account as changes to the projects being submitted for the final submission in August. Lucinda commented that the TJPDC/CAMPO is considering revising the Smart Scale process. Travis Pietila commented that Smart Scale applications had come up on the CTAC agenda repeatedly, but as part of a long agenda, they did not always get enough time; perhaps CTAC could dedicate a full meeting to such an important topic in the future to allow for more in-depth discussion.

Tristan Fessell asked about how projects that are being submitted for Smart Scale were chosen by the TJPDC/CAMPO/localities and how CTAC and the public might be involved earlier in this decision-making process rather than offering feedback only on Smart Scale applications being put together after the projects have been chosen for submission. Jessica noted that, at least for our region's Smart Scale submissions, this process starts with long-range planning documents (such as the LRTP and the Jefferson Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan) that have relied heavily on public input to identify and prioritize transportation projects for our region. When Smart Scale funding becomes available, locality staff chose projects from these long-range planning documents, opting for the most highly prioritized projects that also complement/leverage projects that are already funded.

Travis Pietila noted the limits on time and suggested that we only discuss specific projects if committee members had specific questions.

Martin Meth asked how much a project could be changed after it is submitted for funding. Chuck Proctor responded that some minor project components could be changed, but nothing that would be considered a change of project scope.

Martin Meth also asked to clarify if the MPO would be approving the Smart Scale applications at their July meeting; Jessica confirmed and noted that the MPOs approval was a necessary requirement of the official submission for these applications. Tim Keller noted that the localities in which the projects are planned to take place would also need to pass resolutions of support for the projects to move forward.

Tristan Fessell asked whether the projects identified in the meeting materials were all going forward or if they would be voted on individually. Sandy Shackelford clarified that the projects would all be voted on by the policy board as a group, but they could pull any number of projects, revising the resolution if they so desired.

Stuart Gardner asked if the state of Virginia would accept all projects submitted. Chuck Proctor clarified that all projects had passed the pre-application phase and met VDOT's requirements at that stage, but it was not likely that all would be funded.

Martin Meth asked what would be the purpose of a vote by CTAC on this topic. Jessica clarified that CTAC could move to encourage or not encourage the MPO Policy Board to make a resolution of support in favor of any or all of these projects. Stuart Gardner noted that people might be hesitant to make such a motion because they had not thoroughly reviewed all of the projects. Joseph French agreed.

Tim Keller noted that this made him concerned about the purpose of CTAC, specifically that its role is to bring the localities together for collective decision-making, but the process in place currently effectively gives the localities most of the decision-making power and CTAC ends up "rubber-stamping something that is fait accompli." Sandy Shackelford noted that the letters of support by the MPO for projects being submitted by the jurisdictions is not to say we approve the projects, but to confirm that the projects are aligned with the priorities identified in the long-range transportation plan (LRTP).

Tim Keller then moved and Tristan Fessell seconded that CTAC encourages the MPO Policy Board to pass a resolution of support for the Smart Scale project submissions included in the meeting packet. A voice vote was used with all members voting in favor of the motion, though Lucas Beane and Joseph French abstained. Several members noted that they would still like to have more CTAC involvement earlier in the process in the future.

### **COVID-19 Impacts on Transportation and other topics - Jessica**

Jessica noted that COVID-19 has dramatically impacted the way we move and outlined a few different ways early data is showing that change. She asked if the group is interested in learning more about this topic in future agenda items.

Travis Pietila voiced an interest in the topic. Tristan Fessell specifically mentioned wanting to know more about COVID impacts to tax revenue might impact transportation funding in the future. Donna Chen voiced an interest in how transit access and use has been impacted across socioeconomic class and how that can be considered with regards to service changes. Stuart Gardner voiced an interest in learning about other cities around the world that have used COVID as a catalyst to close streets (to vehicles) and transform their cities – and how they might serve as inspiration for our area. Joseph French voiced an interest in learning more about COVID impacts on local communities who are 1) far from grocery stores and 2) have low rates of car ownership.

Tristan Fessell said that aside from COVID, he was also interested in learning more about locally-relevant rail projects.

Travis Pietila asked about how COVID has impacted use of bike and ped trails. Tim Keller asked about how we could make better use of technology to gather data that would help us better answer transportation-related questions, especially origin and destination information. Donna Chen spoke briefly about VDOT's contract with Streetlight, and Chuck Proctor spoke about the contract and the quality of the data in a bit more detail.

**Additional Matters from the Public:**

There were no matters from the public.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 PM.