

Citizen Transportation Advisory Committee Draft Meeting Minutes: November 18, 2020

Committee – Voting Members (Present)

Travis Pietila (MPO)
Lucas Beane (City of Charlottesville)
Joseph French (City of Charlottesville)
Patrick Healy (City of Charlottesville)
Tim Keller (Albemarle County – Planning Commission)
Ray Heron (City of Charlottesville)
Marty Meth (Albemarle County)
Nicholas Garber (Albemarle County)

Voting Members (Absent)

Chair – Tristan Fessell (Albemarle County)
Vice Chair – Stuart Gardner (MPO)
Donna Chen (MPO)
Gary Heaton (City of Charlottesville – Planning Commission)
Lee Kondor (Albemarle County)

Staff (Present)

Chuck Proctor – VDOT
Chip Boyles – TJPDC/CAMPO
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 Travis Pietila at 7:06pm.

Matters from the Public

There were no matters from the public.

Approval of September 16th Meeting Minutes

There was an error with the meeting minutes attached. This item was postponed until the January 2021 meeting.

Performance Measures and Targets – Lucinda Shannon (CAMPO)

Ms. Shannon explained that in 2017, the federal government asked the states to begin setting transportation targets to help them reach their transportation goals. The states and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) set those goals in their Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs). States and MPOs then set targets to ensure that they are on track to reach those goals;

performance measures are the measures of how the state and MPOs are doing in the target/goal categories. Ms. Shannon said that the state does all of the measuring and reporting. The state sets state targets for all categories, and MPOs are able to set their own targets for those categories or adopt the state targets.

The state's receipt of funding is tied to meeting their stated targets, but MPOs are not impacted by meeting their stated targets.

Last year, Ms. Shannon spoke to CTAC members about safety performance targets. This year, she would also be talking about asset and system condition targets. (There are also public transit performance targets.)

The asset and system condition targets are set every four year (last set in 2017), but there is a mid-term check-up, when the state and MPOs can revise their targets based on performance measures thus far. Of the nine targets under asset and system conditions, CAMPO set five of them differently than the state targets in 2017.

Mr. Garber asked if the targets were set by staff, CTAC, or MPO Tech in 2017. Ms. Shannon clarified that the targets were recommended to both committees and then approved by those committees.

Mr. Pietila asked why there were some categories where the target was set quite high, but the measure currently falls far short. Ms. Shannon suggested that it might be a typo. Mr. Pietila also asked why some targets were set so low compared to measures that showed the asset/system to be in a better condition than expected. Mr. Proctor clarified that recent mild winters have resulted in a surplus of funds that must be spent in the same fiscal year – that surplus funding is easily spent on paving, which likely improved those measures unexpectedly.

Ms. Shannon also reviewed the safety targets and measures. These targets are set every year.

Mr. Garber asked if the performance measure information given by the state to the MPO only included the results (as percentage increases or decreases) or if it included all raw data. Ms. Shannon stated that it included raw data and she would be willing to share the workbooks provided by the state.

Ms. Shannon clarified that she hoped CTAC would make a recommendation whether the MPO should revert back to the state targets or stick with the CAMPO-set targets for all the measures in the asset and systems conditions category at the January meeting; additionally, she hoped that CTAC would make a recommendation for the targets for all measures in the safety category.

Smart Scale updates – Chuck Proctor (VDOT) and Chip Boyles (TJPDC/CAMPO)

Mr. Proctor stated that VDOT was wrapping up the validation stage of the Smart Scale process and the scoring stage was beginning. In January, VDOT staff would present a memo to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) recommending which proposed projects are funded.

Mr. Garber asked for clarification on the Smart Scale process, specifically what role CTAC plays in determining which projects are funded. Mr. Proctor described his role, long before the pre-

application phase of Smart Scale, to talk with committees (including CTAC) about regional priorities and coordinating feasibility and other studies (using VDOT-paid consultants) and helping the PDC/MPO and localities prepare their applications.

Mr. Boyles stated that he had presented on the revised Smart Scale process within the MPO at previous CTAC meetings, and he was returning to expand on some details and answer some lingering questions. Mr. Boyles clarified that under the existing Smart Scale process, staff have presented potential Smart Scale projects to CTAC and MPO Tech before those projects were submitted. CTAC and MPO Tech would make their recommendation to the MPO Policy Board regarding whether that body should or should not approve submission of those projects. CTAC and MPO Tech also review the projects being submitted by the localities, but the Policy Board does not get to approve (or not) the submission of those projects.

Mr. Boyles continued that under the existing Smart Scale process, CTAC and MPO Tech did not hear about potential projects until much later in the process (closer to application submission). However, with the new process, CTAC and MPO Tech would be involved much earlier in the process. As soon as the scores from the previous round are released, the MPO would begin identifying the four or five projects to be submitted (in 1.5 years). Of those four or five projects, up to two “priority projects” would be identified for higher levels of public engagement. These projects would each have a unique “advisory panel” to investigate details of the projects. It is hoped that VDOT could provide some funding for increased technical investigation.

Mr. Boyles stated that the biggest change in the current memo versus the previous version is that there is a provision for the MPO Policy Board to bypass this process if they want to submit a particular project that was not initially considered. This is consistent with how the CTB can bypass their own processes for funding projects, provided they adequately explain to the public why they’ve chosen to do so.

In regards to the safety and asset/system conditions targets, Mr. Boyles noted that CTAC and MPO Tech could refer to those measures identified as priorities in order to justify choices for which projects are chosen to be among the four or five projects chosen for submission.

Mr. Pietila commented that potential projects should be presented in the packets ahead of time instead of only being presented in the meeting; additionally, Mr. Pietila asked that meetings budget enough time to dive deeply into those projects. Mr. Boyles stated that this process is intended to give enough time to do both of those things.

Mr. Meth asked if the localities would be following a similar model. Mr. Boyles stated that that decision is up to them.

Mr. Meth asked how many instances of public engagement are planned for each project. Mr. Boyles said that each priority project would have its own website, which would list the dates and locations of the advisory panel and other committee meetings. Mr. Boyles suggested that interested committee members review the old Route 29 Solutions website, which is the model for this process revision.

Mr. Meth made a motion that CTAC recommends the revised Smart Scale procedure as outlined by Mr. Boyles in the memo included in the packet. Ray Heron seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Rivanna River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing – Jessica Hersh-Ballering (TJPDC/CAMPO)

Ms. Hersh-Ballering stated that the TJPDC – in collaboration with VDOT, City of Charlottesville, and Albemarle County – hosted an online workshop to review the results of a VDOT feasibility study and get feedback from the public on the potential project to build a bicycle and pedestrian crossing over the Rivanna River in the vicinity of Riverview Park. Ms. Hersh-Ballering reviewed the content of that online workshop, including the project history, the purpose of the feasibility study, and the two route options identified in the feasibility study.

Ms. Hersh-Ballering stated that they had received so much feedback (both during the online workshop and by email afterward), that she was not able to share a full analysis at this time. However, she noted that, so far, a few themes seem to emerge: parking concerns (especially in the Riverview Park area; not just with this project, but identifying a pre-existing concern among neighborhood residents) and the disruption a popular amenity might cause to a primarily residential neighborhood.

Ms. Hersh-Ballering then asked for feedback from CTAC members regarding the project overall, the feasibility study results, and projected next steps. Mr. Heron commented that a “bridge-builder friend” said that option #1 was a “no-brainer.” Mr. Keller complimented the presentation, and asked Mr. Proctor about the existing pressures on this area and the constituency of residents who might oppose any additional projects in their area – would it be better to identify another route option further south? Mr. Proctor noted that there were not any other feasible options in the study area – this was confirmed by local staff early on in the feasibility study process. Mr. Keller noted that those initial options identified as infeasible could’ve been addressed in the online workshop.

Mr. Pietila asked about proposed parking changes as part of this project. Mr. Proctor noted that significant parking changes were not specifically studied as part of the feasibility study, but local staff are aware of the need and looking at options on both the east and west sides of the project area.

Mr. Meth asked how long it would take to walk both route options from one end to the other. Neither Ms. Hersh-Ballering or Mr. Proctor were sure, but Mr. Proctor noted that option #2 was shorter.

Mr. Meth also asked when the City and/or County would need to account for this project in their budgets. Ms. Hersh-Ballering clarified that some funding options don’t require any local match, while others do, so that would depend on the funding option.

Mr. Meth also asked about the allocation of parking spaces between recreational users and commuters. Ms. Hersh-Ballering clarified that based on analyses done by Albemarle County for the Pantops Area Master Plan, the expectation is that the vast majority of commuters would not be driving to either trailhead, then walking or biking, but rather they would be walking or biking for the entirety of their commute.

Mr. Keller asked about the loss of a major employer from the Pantops area (State Farm) and that impact on the scoring of the project for Smart Scale. Mr. Proctor was optimistic that the scoring

would not be significantly impacted by that change because of the larger scoring impact of traffic congestion on nearby Free Bridge and the expected impact of the bicycle and pedestrian crossing to reduce that congestion.

Mr. Garber commented that it would be valuable to outline the benefits and consequences of the project to the public. Mr. Pietila commented that the second route option's low clearance made it "kind of a non-starter."

MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Count Update – Jessica Hersh-Ballering

There was not enough time to include this agenda item. It will be moved to the January agenda.

Additional Matters from the Public:

There were no matters from the public.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 PM.