

**Summary Minutes of the
HRTPO Regional Transportation Advisory Panel (RTAP) Meeting
August 31, 2022**

The HRTPO Regional Transit Advisory Panel (RTAP) Meeting was called to order at 12:06 p.m. in the Regional Building Boardroom, 723 Woodlake Drive, Chesapeake, Virginia, with the following in attendance:

RTAP Members in Attendance:

Zakkiyya Cunningham	Janet V. Green
Keith Darrow	Kurt T. Hofelich
Martino DeStefano	Sarah Jane Kirkland
Michael Giardino	Martha McClees
Ben Goodill	Jim Wofford

HRTPO/HRPDC Staff:

Robert A. Crum, Jr.	Matthew Harrington
Rob Case	Uros Jovanovic
Rob Cofield	Pavithra Parthasarathi
Kathlene Grauberger	Chris Vaigneur

Others Recorded Attending:

Steve Lambert, Jeree Grimes, Ray Amoruso, Amy Braziel, Kate Baker, Ed Reed, Kristy Lockhart, Noelle Pinkard, Angela Hopkins, Troy Eisenberger, LJ Hansen

Minutes

Mr. Robert Crum, HRTPO Executive Director, asked if there were any changes or corrections to the minutes of the January 25, 2022 RTAP meeting, which were included in the Agenda packet. Hearing none, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Local Transit Coalition Building

Mr. Robert Crum, HRTPO Executive Director, stated that as part of the process to develop and finalize recommendations to strengthen public transit in the Hampton Roads region, RTAP members, at their previous meeting, discussed the need to develop a coalition of local stakeholders and advocates to promote the importance of transit.

Mr. Arthur L. Guzzetti, Vice President of Policy and Mobility for the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), briefed the RTAP on best practices related to local transit coalition building.

Mr. Guzzetti noted that over the past several years, ballot referendums have been utilized more effectively to advance transit in the United States. These successes show that the public is willing to raise taxes in order to have a good, reliable transit system.

Mr. Guzzetti highlighted some of the significant challenges/opportunities in 2022 in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), including:

- Project Delivery – good infrastructure exists, but there are workforce issues
- Workforce – affecting all sectors after the pandemic – top issue according to transit agencies
- Evolving work and travel trends – work from home has increased, yet the belief is that trends will evolve beyond work
- Metrics – work from home households – transit usage is now two or three days a week – fewer trips, but no less important

Norfolk Naval Base Circulator

Mr. Ray Amoruso, Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) Chief Planning and Development Officer, stated that one of the recommendations identified by RTAP was to consider implementing an internal base circulator at Naval Station Norfolk as a pilot project. He indicated that HRT was recently awarded grant funding via DRPT's innovative new funding program, the Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP). The TRIP program is a new statewide grant program aimed at improving regional connectivity of urban areas with populations in excess of 100,000 and reducing barriers to transit use among low-income communities.

The HRT grant will provide three years of TRIP regional connectivity funding to support circulator service within the base by connecting to existing transit as well as provide last-mile accessibility and mobility options to employees.

Mr. Amoruso summarized the route selection, circulator schedule, and performance metrics that will be implemented. HRT has awarded the contract to James River Transportation with an anticipated service launch in early December.

Bus Stop Audit Pilot for 757 Express

Dr. Robert Case, HRTPO Chief Transportation Engineer, stated that in response to recommendations finalized by the RTAP over the past year, HRTPO staff included at task in its FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to assess key bus stops along the planned Regional Backbone Network/757 Express. The assessment will examine the environment around these bus stops in terms of walkability, pedestrian accessibility and safety (e.g. sidewalks), availability of multi-use paths, and bus shelters.

Dr. Case elaborated on the task, indicating that as part of this effort, indicated that HRTPO staff will:

- Coordinate with stakeholders
- Select key bus stops along the first three 757 Express routes
- Research best practices for bus stop environment
- Document the presence/absence/condition of the components of a whole public transportation system
- Prepare recommendations

Dr. Case noted that the final step includes exploring funding opportunities through various options. He also noted that based on the results of the pilot, HRTPO staff could apply this technique to other routes/agencies in the future.

Upcoming 2023 General Assembly Session

Mr. Robert Crum, HRTPO Executive Director, stated that based on direction provided by RTAP, a Hampton Roads Transit Advocacy Day was organized in Richmond on February 3, 2022 during the 2022 General Assembly Session to meet with state legislators and local elected officials to discuss the importance of transit to the Hampton Roads/757 region and the need to maintain a dedicated source of funding for Hampton Roads Transit (HRT).

Ms. Noelle Pinkard, HRT Organizational Advancement Officer, indicated that although HRT had not yet finalized its legislative agenda, she stated that it was essential to preserve and protect the dedicated regional transit funds. She also stated that HRT plans to focus on non-diesel delivery of transit technology in the form of zero emission bus fleets.

Discussion ensued with the Panel agreeing to hold a second Transit Advocacy Day during the 2023 General Assembly Session.

Old/New Business

An RTAP member stated that the Freebee Microtransit Service, operating in the resort area to provide convenient and free door-to-door, on-demand public transportation for residents and visitors, has been extremely successful. He noted that Freebee is a one-year pilot program with five vehicles operating 12 hours a day throughout the resort area utilizing electric vehicles. He also noted that it is encouraging that the service has been embraced by the public.

Mr. Robert Crum stated that it would be beneficial to have Virginia Beach staff brief the RTAP on its Freebee Microtransit Service.

Adjournment

There being no more business before the Regional Transit Advisory Panel, the meeting was adjourned at 2:13 p.m.