

VAMPO Spring Conference 2011:

May 24th 2011

The Virginia Association of Metropolitan Planning Organization's held a conference on May 24th 2011 in Charlottesville, Virginia, at the Water Street Center conference facility for the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission.

Welcome

Steve Williams, Chair of the VAMPO Board, welcomed everyone to the event.

Presentation 1:

Presented by Justin Brown, JLARC Project Leader:

JLARC Review of Virginia's Transportation Planning and Programming

Mr. Brown discussed the findings of the from JLARC's review of Virginia's Transportation Planning and Programming. Mr. Brown stated that House Bill 42 and Senate Bill 201 from the 2010 Virginia General Assembly session directed JLARC to begin this study. JLARC Staff reviewed Federal and State statutory frameworks, reviewed VDOT, CTB, DRPT and MPO data, conducted more than 30 interviews and surveyed all MPO directors, VDOT district administrators, PDC, CTB and MPO Board members.

The report's keys finding were...

- Minimal MPO role in state allocation process is a missed opportunity for more informed decisions.
- Performance-driven prioritization plays a limited role in project selection and allocation decisions.
- A variety of improvements are needed in the State's programming processes and documents.
- Fiscally-constrained environment underscores need for prioritization, transparency, and involvement of MPOs.
- Lack of clarity in *Code of Virginia* leads to different expectations for State and MPO roles.

The JLARC staff had the following recommendations for improving the role of MPOs in Virginia's transportation planning and programming.

These MPO-specific recommendations were...

- VDOT should work with VAMPO to determine how to more effectively capitalize on the capabilities of Virginia's 14 MPOs, in particular on MPO input in State allocation decisions.
- The General Assembly may wish to amend the *Code of Virginia* to require VDOT and the CTB to
 - Provide MPOs structured opportunity to provide meaningful input on priorities

- Ask the CTB to better document their planning and programming process
- Allow MPOs to draft their priorities within the context of CTB decision-making parameters (i.e. shovel-ready, three-year completion dates, etc.)
- Allow MPOs access to VDOT project database
- Work to make sure that the SYIP and the TIPs/STIP are fully compliant

Discussion – VDRPT 5303 Funding Process

Amy Inman, planning and project manager from DRPT, gave a brief overview of what DRPT and FTA are expecting from the annual MPO work program. Ms. Inman stated that DRPT is encouraging the MPOs establish a stronger narrative within their UPWPs in order to ensure that the anticipated goals for the next fiscal year are clearly defined and easy to benchmark. Ms. Inman stated that DRPT staff would be available for assistance and guidance during this process. Ms. Inman also encouraged MPO staff to participate in DRPT's grantee workshops in order to learn more about DRPT's goals for clarifying the UPWP.

Break for Lunch – Discussion period

Large MPOs and small MPOs were split up to discuss issues that pertain to these types of MPOs. Key elements of the discussion included...

Large MPOs

- State code info/language for MPOs
 - MPOs and federal funds
- Process for state code language, MPOs should take the lead
- VAMPO responsive to Virginia General Assembly session
- Allocating all STP for all MPOs
- Federal Transportation Bill Reauthorization – New MPOs

Small MPOs

- Assistance from VDOT with the costs of technical work
- Federal Transportation Bill Reauthorization – marginalizing or removing small MPOs
- Performance measurement system
- Changes to funding sources at the federal level, no more STP
- Nature of prioritization process – one process, keep it simple
- MPO board members, unaware of MPO purpose and need
- Peer support between MPOs to illustrate relevance

Presentation 3:

Presented by Camelia Ravanbakht, Deputy Executive Director, Hampton Roads TPO
HRTPO Transportation Project Prioritization, LRTP

within each of the six criteria. Scoring was vetted through MPO staff and the MPO technical committee. The highest scoring projects within each functional class were chosen until funds were exhausted.

Mr. Waple also stated that a major issue in the Fredericksburg area is land use planning. The next steps in the LRTP planning process will focus on how future transportation projects will function within different types of land use planning. Four land use scenarios were developed...

- **Decentralized Growth:** Continued dispersed development patterns
- **Green Scenario:** New growth directed away from environmentally-sensitive areas
- **Compact Development Centers:** New growth focused into compact, walkable communities
- **Jobs and Housing Balance:** Regional development if new employment opportunities come to the region

Mr. Waple stated that funding implications for transportation infrastructure needs within these four growth scenarios will be analyzed during the upcoming LRTP update process. Mr. Waple also emphasized that the MPO has no role in land use policy within any of the localities it serves, however, land use is inextricably linked to transportation planning and that considering future development can only help establish a more useful and accurate LRTP.

Discussion – Final Thoughts and Critical Takeaways from VAMPO Spring 2011 Conference

- **Codification of the role of the MPO**
 - Draft a resolution for VA General Assembly Consideration
- **Partnerships and better communication between MPOs**
- **Review and standardize federal regulation for MPOs**
- **Reach out to federal representatives about the importance of MPOs**
 - Concerns about upcoming reauthorization
- **Better communication between MPOs, VDOT district offices, and VDOT central office**

Next Meeting – VAMPO Board Members will email schedule options