

Southside Planning District Commission
Transportation Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
Friday, January 21, 2022

The Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) met on Friday, January 21, 2022, at 10:00 A.M. in the conference room of the Southside Planning District Office. It was a hybrid meeting with attendees having the option to access the meeting virtually or in-person. Those attending in-person: Robert Hendrick, Mecklenburg County; and Chad Neese, SPDC. Those attending virtually: C.W. Crowder, Town of South Boston; Hope Cole, Town of South Boston; David Cook, VDOT; Tommy Johnson, VDOT; Carl Espy, Town of Halifax; Liz McAdory, VDOT; Nicole Mueller, VDOT; Joseph Craddock, VDOT; Todd Scheid, VDOT; Kim Callis, Town of South Hill; Jake Herrman, VDOT; and Rick Youngblood, VDOT.

Call Meeting to Order

Chad Neese called the meeting to order at 10:02 A.M.

Approval of Minutes from April 1, 2021

On a motion by C.W. Crowder and second by Robert Hendrick, the minutes from the April 1, 2021, meeting were approved as presented.

Public Comments

None.

Active Transportation Plan

SPDC staff noted that the Active Transportation Plan will consist of the update and consolidation of two existing plans (Halifax County Trails, Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan and the Lake Country Bicycle, Pedestrian & Trails Plan) into one plan. This will include an increased emphasis on pedestrians. Staff spent a great deal of time reviewing and updating a bicycle and pedestrian facilities inventory for the entire region. To provide additional opportunity for community engagement, a Southside Active Transportation Hub has been created. This will allow the public to access interactive maps, data dashboards, and surveys to learn about and participate in the planning process. Access has also been approved to Strava's (fitness tracking app) Metro program. This provides additional data beyond the publicly available heat maps that show common routes for walkers, joggers, and cyclists through the region. We hope to dive into the data to learn more about trips types, demographics, and recreation/commuting activity over the past few years. SPDC staff anticipates moving forward with public engagement and meetings in the near future. The National Park Service is currently working on an update to the Tobacco Heritage Trail Master Plan, so coordination on outreach for both projects is being looked at to try and capitalize on public interest and share overlapping data.

Title VI Program

Mr. Neese noted that the SPDC filed their required Annual Report on Title VI to VDOT's Civil Rights Division on October 13th.

FY23 Rural Transportation Planning Work Program

A tentative FY23 Work Program was briefly discussed. The biggest addition to the work program is the inclusion of work on the 2050 Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan. The work program will be finalized in the coming months and will need to be adopted at the SPDC's quarterly meeting in April.

Smart Scale – Round 5

Jake Herrman, VDOT Planner in the Richmond District, reviewed previous rounds of Smart Scale submissions from the Southside region. Some key takeaways include: projects around \$5 million dollars and under tend to fare better for our region than more expensive ones, we may need to reduce or remove elements from applications that haven't been funded in the past to help bring costs down to increase the application's competitiveness, and some applications struggle to score well in economic development and safety which are the two most important categories for our region. Moving forward we should view Smart Scale from a needs-based approach, which includes: VTrans Tiered Needs, Identified Safety Needs (PSI segments and intersections), utilize previous studies (such as the US 58 Arterial Corridor Preservation Plan), re-examine previous Smart Scale applications, and identified priorities at the local, regional, and state levels.

David Cook, VDOT Planner in the Lynchburg District, provided an overview of past Smart Scale applications in Halifax County. He then went over upcoming changes to the environmental and land uses sections of the Smart Scale program and how those changes would have impacted our applications during the last round. It is important to remember that each round of Smart Scale is unique, so past performance cannot guarantee how applications will fare in future rounds. One of the biggest changes to the environmental section is the change from $\frac{1}{4}$ mile buffer to a tiered approach, ranging from a 30' buffer to a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile buffer, depending on the type of project being proposed. Shifting to the land use element, this has not been a category for our region in the past but has been for more populated areas throughout the Commonwealth. VDOT believes that expanding land use as a scoring category for all localities will help even out the playing field. Our region will see a change to the following weighted scoring categories: Congestion – 10%, Safety – 30%, Accessibility – 10%, Air Quality – 10%, Economic Development – 30%, and Land Use – 10%.

Mr. Neese stated that the SPDC will be reaching out to the localities in the future to see if they would like assistance with Smart Scale applications. He and VDOT staff are willing to help localities as much as they can.

Adjournment

With no further business the TTAC meeting was adjourned.