



Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission

Transportation Technical Advisory Committee

MINUTES

Approved at March 28, 2017 meeting

Date: TUESDAY, January 24, 2017

Time: 1:30 PM

Location:

VDOT Residency Conference Room,
23096 Courthouse Avenue
Accomac, VA 23301

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Larry DiRe, Cape Charles representative
Barbara Haxter, Accomack Airport*
Granville Hogg, A-NPDC*
Tim Holloway, Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel*
William Kerbin, Town of Onancock
Larry LeMond, ANTDC*, Chairman
Ron Marney, Chincoteague*
Rich Morrison, Accomack County*, Vice Chairman
Peter Stith, Northampton County*

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Joe Bulin, ESCSB, Alt
Vanessa Cousineau, ESAAA/CAA representative
Robert Duer, Town of Exmore
Chris Isdell, VDOT Accomack Residency*
Abra Jacobs, Center for Independent Living
John Maher, STAR Transit
Alex Parry, Bay Coast Railroad
Jerry Pauley, VDOT, Alt.
Ivan Rucker, FHWA
Lisa Sedjat, ESCSB
Eric Stringfield, VDOT District Planner*
Kristen Tremblay, Accomack County, Alt.

STAFF:

Elaine Meil, A-NPDC
Barbara Schwenk, A-NPDC, Secretary
Dinah Oliver, VDOT
Curt Smith, A-NPDC
Keisha Wilkins, VDOT

***Voting Members**

- I. **Call to order** – a quorum being present, Chairman LeMond called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.
- II. **Approval of November 22, 2016** – Minutes of the November 22, 2016 meeting were approved by motion of Mr. Morrison, seconded by Mr. Marney, and carried unanimously.
- III. **Staff Update pp. 5 - 108** – Ms. Schwenk presented the staff update and asked if the members preferred to get articles of interest and other materials between meetings or held and put into the packet. The consensus was to receive materials as links as they are available.
- IV. **Unfinished Business**
 - A. **Bike/Hike Trail Feasibility Study Update**

Ms. Schwenk reported that the first meeting of the stakeholders was held on January 12. Minutes were previously sent out to the TTAC members. The group will not meet again until there is something that needs discussion between all members. Ms. Schwenk is working on the action items the group identified. Mr. Smith

commented that this trail should be incorporated into the overall Bike Plan for the Eastern Shore. A review of the 2014 Bike Plan was requested and will be provided at the next meeting.

B. Sidewalk Gap Study

Using the Road Centerline Data as requested by VDOT, a test file has been set up for Onancock in which the sidewalks are color coded as 1) missing, 2) complete, 3) missing one side (with direction indicated), 4) deteriorated or non ADA-compliant. Ms. Schwenk plans to finish the coding next week and send the file to Chris Isdell for review. After his review, she will send it along to Bill Kerbin, Town Manager, Onancock. If this method works well, sidewalks in other towns will be cataloged the same way. An Excel spreadsheet will be used to collect the data so it can be sorted and presented to each town for prioritization. The data can also be easily changed in the file as sidewalks are improved, making it a living document.

C. Private Unpaved Roads

Ms. Schwenk reported that other than making a list of the roads that look like they might be unpaved using satellite imagery, no further progress has been made on this project. Accomack County Planning department shared a map they had already made of unpaved roads, which will be used to compare to the list.

V. New Business

A. CTB Smart Scale Evaluations Review

TTAC reviewed four of seven projects that made the first evaluations cut. They are improvements to T's corner at Route 175 and Route 13, changing the intersection of Saxis and Temperanceville Roads with Route 13 and installing a traffic signal, installing a signal at the Parkway Boulevard into Accomack Airport Industrial Park, and improvements to the intersection of Route 13 and Route 184. The final determination will not be known until June, when the CTB finalizes the project list and allocates funding.

B. Six-Year Financial Plan review

Ms. Schwenk reported that the plan was not yet available but will send it out to members as soon as it is.

C. Discussed before A & B: Route 13 long-term planning for anticipated increase in freight traffic

Mr. Hogg brought up long term planning for Route 13 and concerns about the increase in truck traffic if the chicken plants on the Shore negotiate contracts to ship chickens to China. The poultry industry is expanding and there are concerns that more trucks will be traveling south through Northampton County to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel to the Port of Virginia for export. This may be moot at this point though, as commented on by one member, as President Trump has already canceled the possibility of an Asian trade treaty. Another member commented that all product from the Tyson plant in Temperanceville goes to northeast markets, not south. Also, both plants are already operating at capacity, so additional freight seems unlikely in the foreseeable future.

Mr. Smith reported that the Route 13 long-range planning issue came up at the A-NPDC board meeting last week. The Commissioners preferred that this issue be taken up by the TTAC. However, the PDC would be able to assist in the area of applying for funding for improvements to Route 13.

The question is whether the TTAC wants to take up long-range planning for Route 13 improvements in the coming years. Should it be added to the work plan? Members discussed the traffic counts kept by the CBBT but felt that more information was needed on freight traffic projections before they could make a decision about whether this is an issue that needs attention. Numbers for freight going north and south are needed. Mr. Holloway offered to provide CBBT counts on request.

Mr. Hogg was also concerned about the current northbound passenger vehicle traffic that occurs between the CBBT and the signal at Route 184 during the summer—typically 25,000 vehicles on Saturdays in late July and August. This traffic backs up whenever the signal is red or when vehicles such as gas trucks or the STAR Transit van stops before going over the railroad tracks south of the signal. The issue is how to manage current traffic and how to handle any additional traffic that occurs in future. Currently, freight traffic seems to be dependent on fuel costs. When the cost is low, more trucks travel the roads. When the fuel costs go up, this traffic drops off, so it is difficult to predict. But this passenger vehicle traffic appears to be increasing.

Mr. Morrison commented that there is significant truck traffic on secondary roads which aren't designed for it. Perhaps those roads should be looked at instead.

Chairman LeMond commented that there are already 2 or 3 studies on Route 13, and perhaps the TTAC should look at those recommendations for implementation. We need more information about freight traffic before we can make a decision. In addition, about 20 years ago, VDOT studied the cost of moving the railroad tracks on the east side of the highway in Nassawadox, Painter, Keller, and Melfa in order to widen Route 13. Deemed fiscally infeasible, it was not pursued. Perhaps that study should be looked at again or updated. This prompted discussion about how projects are selected under Smart Scale.

Both counties applied for a total of seven improvements under the Smart Scale program, and four of them made the first cut. It was noted that all four were in the 2016 Route 13 Safety Study. However, both counties put in a Smart Scale applications to improve Route 602 between Belle Haven and Occohannock Neck Road, as it is a heavily traveled shortcut. However, this route did not make the cut even though both counties have repeatedly asked that it be improved. It was on the Six-Year Improvement Plan at one time, but disappeared from the list. This fact prompted the comment that unless the improvements are part of a VDOT study, they won't be funded under Smart Scale. This observation prompted speculation about whether any road not connected to Route 13 would qualify for Smart Scale funding. Members commented that unless VDOT funds a study, any identified improvements will not be considered for funding.

Chairman LeMond asked how other members felt about looking into Route 13 improvements to carry more freight. Members indicated that they may look at the issue after they have more information such as freight traffic projections, determination of whether there will be an increase in freight traffic from the chicken processors, and other issues that might come up. Mr. Smith and Ms. Schwenk will conduct research and present results at the next meeting on March 28.

VII Public participation – none.

VIII. Next meeting – March 28, 2017, 1:30 p.m.

IX. Action Items for Next Meeting

A. Research trends in freight traffic on Route 13.

B. Review Bike Plan 2014 and make a presentation.

X. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 pm by motion of Hogg, seconded by LeMond and carried unanimously.

CONTACT:

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