

**Regional Connectors Study
Joint Steering (Policy) Committee & Working Group Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2022, 9:00 am**

Steering (Policy) Committee

The following voting members attended the meeting (alphabetically by city):

Rick West (CH)
Donnie Tuck (HA)
McKinley Price, Chair (NN)
Martin Thomas (NO)
Michael Duman (SU)
Robert Dyer (VB)

The following voting members were absent from the meeting (alphabetically by city):

Shannon Glover (PO)

Working Group

The following voting members attended the meeting (alphabetically by city):

Troy Eisenberger (CH)
Bryan Stilley (NN)
Dorian Allen (NO)
James Wright (PO)
Ric Lowman (VB)

The following voting members were absent from the meeting (alphabetically by city):

Jason Souders (SU)

Others

The following others attended the meeting (alphabetically by last name):

Robert A. Crum, Jr. (HRTPO/HRPDC)	Keith Nichols (HRTPO)
Carl Jackson (PO)	Kevin Page (HRTAC)
Steve Jones (Naval Station Norfolk)	Lorna Parkins (Michael Baker Intl.)
Matt Klepeisz (HRPDC)	Pavithra Parthasarathi (HRTPO)
Karen McPherson (McPherson Consulting)	Paul Prideaux (Michael Baker Intl.)

Camelia Ravanbakht (RCS Project
Coordinator)
Dmitry Rekhter (HRPDC)
Angela Rico (NN)

Dale Stith (HRTPO)
Joe Strange (Michael Baker Intl.)
Cathie Vick (VPA)

The following others attended the meeting virtually (alphabetically by last name):

Kyle Gilmer (HRTPO)
Lori Sharp (PRR)
Naomi Stein (EPB)
Bill Thomas (Michael Baker Intl.)

1. Call to Order

Chair Price called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Crum, HRTPO/HRPDC Executive Director, asked attendees to introduce themselves.

3. Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

4. Minutes

The August 9, 2022, and September 27, 2022, minutes were approved, with Mayor Dyer making the motion and Mayor Duman seconding the motion.

5. Regional Connectors Study Phase 3: Step 2 – Draft Segment Tiering

Mr. Crum introduced this item by reminding members that they would be looking for approval today of a study approach that was presented at the previous meeting and will be recapped by the consultant today.

Ms. Parkins started her presentation by highlighting the Phase 3 Process graphic, and noted that we are currently in Step 2, which provides an evaluation of congestion relief, revised design and cost estimates, and the final draft segment tiering.

Ms. Parkins reminded the group of the mandated segments and noted that I-664 from Bowers Hill to College Drive (Segment 1a) was moved to the baseline alternative since it is currently included in the fiscally-constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and being studied in an EIS. Ms. Parkins also reminded the group of the definition of segments versus bundles, and tiering.

Mr. Prideaux provided a recap of the quantitative analysis, including congestion benefits, economic benefits, and segment cost estimates. He provided cost estimates for the five mandated segments, which have been updated over the last few months after talking with many groups including VDOT, the Port, and HRSD.

Ms. Parkins highlighted the quantitative evaluation, where the consultant combined the benefits analysis with cost estimates to produce an estimate of cost effectiveness. She noted that Segment 1 had the highest cost with the highest benefits and is a cost-effective segment. She added that Segment 2 is also cost effective, but that Segments 3, 4, and 5 have a lower cost effectiveness. She also added that, while Segments 1a and 2 have medium to high segment readiness and relative ease of permitting, Segments 3, 4, and 5 were low.

Ms. Parkins provided a definition of the three tiers. Segments in Tier I would be ready for advancement and recommended for consideration in the fiscally constrained portion of the 2050 LRTP. Tier II segments would require further refinement and would be recommended for consideration in the 2050 Vision Plan. Tier III segments would be further developed in the future due to technical challenges and uncertainties. She added that ultimately the HRTPO LRTP and Project Prioritization Process will determine whether each project makes the fiscally constrained portion of the LRTP.

Ms. Parkins wrapped up her presentation by noting that based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis, the consultant recommends Segments 1a and 2 for Tier I and Segments 3, 4, and 5 for Tier III.

Ms. Vick (VPA) asked about the impact of tiering and noted that the Route 164 Connector is currently in the LRTP for \$50 million in planning. She added that if a project is not at least in the Vision Plan that we can't look at federal funding sources such as the IIJA, so putting projects in Tier III could lead the region to miss some funding opportunities.

Mr. Crum noted that the RCS will advise and inform the 2050 LRTP update similar to a technical recommendation report. Ms. Stith (HRTPO) added that the RCS is just one of many inputs in the LRTP, and that HRTPO staff work with many regional stakeholders who can submit projects for consideration. She added that not having projects in the LRTP Vision Plan doesn't prevent projects from being studied. However, being in the plan does make projects more competitive.

Mr. Crum reminded the group of the difference between the LRTP fiscally constrained plan versus the Vision Plan. He added that we don't want to eliminate anything at this point, but just learn as much as we can about all of these projects in this process.

Vice-Mayor Thomas (Norfolk) requested keeping all of these options on the table, in case there are future possibilities for federal funding. He asked if there was any harm in putting Tier III projects in the Vision Plan. Mr. Crum responded that there's no harm in having all of these projects in the Vision Plan. He added that it must be clear what's in the fiscally constrained plan, but we can include Tier II and III segments in the Vision Plan if that's the desire of the stakeholders.

Ms. Vick noted that the Port has been very successful at getting federal grants. She added that we need to make sure that all of these projects at least end up in the Vision Plan so that we can continue to move forward with them and could potentially get them funded in the future with federal funds. She added that other metropolitan areas will have plenty of projects in their Vision Plans that are candidates for federal funds.

Mayor West (Chesapeake) added that we might need to change the description of Tiers II and III to match this conversation.

Mr. Wright (Portsmouth) noted that at previous meetings Portsmouth staff provided comments on issues related to impacts on citizens of Segment 2. He added that Portsmouth

prefers Segment 2 be included in the Vision Plan until knowing the full impacts on Portsmouth citizens. Ms. Parkins (MBI) replied that they looked closely at those concerns as part of a more detailed engineering analysis and spoke to this at the September meeting. The consultant found that at this point that there would be very few full property displacements.

Mr. Crum added that we still need to hear what the public has to say about this. He added that while there is flexibility, we need to ensure that the LRTP is a fiscally constrained plan.

Ms. Stith noted that we can keep the three tiers but reword the tiers. Tier I would be considered for the fiscally constrained plan, Tier II would be analyzed and included in the Vision Plan, and Tier III would not include an analysis for 2050 but be included in the Vision Plan.

Vice-Mayor Thomas asked if we use this tiering anywhere else in our planning process. Mr. Crum replied that we don't, but it will inform the 2050 LRTP process.

Mr. Lowman noted that currently only Tier I and Tier II projects are carried forward. Vice-Mayor Thomas then recommended combining Tier II and Tier III into one tier.

Ms. Parkins told the group that the next step is to study up to three bundles and apply greater growth scenarios and stress tests. She added that they will be largely using the travel demand model for projects with fewer unknowns. The consultant will also be doing an operational analysis in Step 3, which is more difficult for projects with more unknowns.

Mr. Prideaux noted that we can combine Tier II and Tier III together, but only do scenario analysis on Tier I projects.

Ms. Parkins added that currently only Tier I and Tier II projects are automatically considered in 2050 LRTP. One option is to change the wording of Tier III so that they will also be considered in the Vision Plan.

Mayor Price (Newport News) noted that the consensus appears to be that Tier III should also be considered in the Vision Plan so as not to hurt chances for future funding. Mr. Crum added that in essence this would involve combining Tiers II and III, and that grouping into two tiers may be easier to understand.

A motion was made to direct the consultant to move forward with two tiers. Tier I would remain the same and contain Segments 1a and 2. Tier II and Tier III would be combined into one tier (referred to as Tier II) and would contain Segments 3, 4, and 5. The tier descriptions would be updated to indicate that Tier I projects would be recommended for consideration in the fiscally constrained 2050 LRTP, while Tier II locations would be recommended for consideration in the 2050 Vision Plan.

Vice-Mayor Thomas made the motion and Mayor West seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

6. Regional Connectors Study Phase 3: Step 3 – Scenario Analysis

Ms. Parkins (MBI) introduced the scenario analysis and provided a description of the three greater growth scenarios. She added that the consultant team had recommended that the analysis be applied to two scenario bundles from Tier I and II segments – Bundle A (Segment 1a – I-664/MMMBT) and Bundle B (Segment 1a plus Segment 2 - VA 164). However, she added that this wording will need to be revisited now that Tiers II and III have been combined.

Mayor Price made a recommendation not to further study Segments 3, 4, and 5 at this point. Ms. Vick replied that, while we perhaps don't need to do an operational analysis on those segments, a stress test of future growth should still be completed.

Ms. Parkins noted that based on comments from the group the consultant could look at three bundles. They would include Bundles A and B and a third bundle that includes more segments. However, the traffic operational analysis would be limited to only Bundles A and B.

A motion was made for the consultant to move forward with scenario planning on three bundles, including Bundles A and B. The consultant will consider the segments to include in the third bundle based on the technical team's professional judgement. However, the consultant will only complete a traffic operational analysis on Bundles A and B.

Mayor West made the motion and Vice-Mayor Thomas seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

7. Regional Connectors Study: Phase 3: Public Meetings Schedule

Ms. Parkins noted that four public meetings will be held in February 2023. These locations are tentatively the Churchland Branch Library in Portsmouth, the VDOT Hampton Roads office in Suffolk, the Pearl Bailey Library in Newport News, and the Lambert's Point Community Center in Norfolk. She added that all of these locations are accessible by public transportation.

8. For Your Information

The agenda packet includes a diary of key decision points in the RCS study from 2017 to the present time.

9. RCS Next Meeting

Ms. Parkins noted that the next meeting of the Joint RCS Steering (Policy) Committee and Working Group will be scheduled for early 2023.

10. Other Items of Interest

Mr. Crum noted that this will be Mayor Price's last meeting. Mr. Crum thanked Mayor Price for his time and commitment to this study and added that there will be a new chair elected at the next meeting.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.