

## **HRTO Subcommittee Minutes – May 13, 2019**

HRTPO Board Room, Chesapeake, VA

The meeting was chaired by Mike Miller (VDOT). The meeting started at 9:35 am.

### **1. Public Comment Period**

- Nobody from the public requested to speak.

2. **Minutes** of the April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting were reviewed. Motion for approval was made by Leo Blades (Hampton) and seconded by Mike Corwin (VDOT). The minutes were approved.

### **3. Hampton Roads Operations Strategy**

- Mike Miller started the topic by mentioning that he had the consultant put together the HRTO Regional Vision and Aspirational Goals document that was included with today's agenda. Mike M. mentioned that he thought it was a great document and that he wanted two things from today's meeting.
  - How as a committee do we move this document forward?
  - Do we want to more formalize this or is the current document good enough for next steps?
- Mike Corwin (VDOT) asked if we need to act on it today or can it wait? Brian Fowler (Norfolk) asked what do we gain by formalizing this? Mike M. responded that we can have a good dialog today even if we don't formalize it. He added that it is important that we document where we are. It's a way that we can formally let FHWA know that this is what we are looking at regionally.
- Frank Hickman (Va Beach) thinks it is a good summary document. He added that we've been weaving a lot in the last few years on this issue. We can use it as a pecking list and can go from there.
- Ken Coody (VDOT) agreed that it was a good summary document but that it needs to have a list of steps, a timeline, and champions listed for each task. Mike M. agreed that it would be good to add these to the document.
- Steve Hetrick (Albeck Gerken) asked if it was the intent to approve this list at a future meeting? Mike M. asked what form of endorsement would we need for this document? Keith Nichols (HRTPO) responded that we would need the subcommittee to provide their approval through a vote.
- Mike M. indicated that we probably need a different format for this, like more of a memo format. Brian F. asked what does that look like? Would it go to city managers?
- Mike M. noted that this document needs to have some weight behind it. For example for goal #1 does every locality need to use D4 software? We don't know what that looks like. Brian F. added that under goal #1, we may need to be a little less specific regarding the controller. Mike M. said that we could interpret goal #1 differently, whether it include just the software or also the hardware.

- Steve H. noted that he liked the timeline idea and listing the steps to get there. But that may be limited by the state, especially goal #1. Mike M. responded that the state will announce the chosen statewide ATMS soon. Brian F. asked if the statewide system could talk with some of the city's systems, especially for interstate diversion? Mike M. said that this means some cities would need to migrate to the state platform. Or at least migrate for the Corridors of Regional Significance. But as we've seen, there is a really good price break if the cities went in together for hardware/firmware.
- Frank H. noted that it will involve people above me as we proceed. He would need the public works director and maybe a deputy city manager involved. How can we elevate this discussion on signals to the higher ups? And help them understand the need for this? We need to get it in front of them. Mike M. responded that we do and we have some tools now for this discussion. What else do we think we need?
- Randy Cooper (Newport News) noted that we also need to look at the IT aspect as we mentioned last month. If IT folks aren't involved then we can't move forward. For example, we can look at the fiber sharing issues between Newport News, Hampton, and VDOT. Mike M. added that if there is a direct link with VDOT and each locality then there will be firewalls on each side. This is one piece of moving forward to communicate with each other.
- Mike C. asked if MOUs only need to be approved through this group or do higher committees also need to approve them? Keith N. replied that MOUs between localities would need to be approved by the TPO Board. Mike C. noted that that brings a lot of weight behind the MOU.
- Brian F. asked how does the regional broadband ring connect to this? Mike M. mentioned that CIOs are talking about sharing information on the same pipes, but it is more geared towards localities and universities and may not be good enough for our needs. Keith N. added that it is expected that there will be fibers in the ring dedicated to transportation uses.
- Brian F. said that this document really isn't showing goals. These are means and methods. How is this going to help? We need that information to take it to the higher ups.
- Ken C. mentioned that we need some sort of summary for each of the nine goals, along with a timeline and a champion, but before all of this we need to state the purpose. What is each city going to get from it? What will VDOT get? It will make the effort worth it, but higher ups may have a different vision than we do. Leo Blades (Hampton) added that improving congestion and traffic management would bring attention to higher ups. We also need to state "What we need from Hampton...", "What we need from Newport News...", etc. Ken C. said what's the purpose of integrated signals? That will show each city what they can get out of it.
- Brian F. said that in one bullet, it is about improving Active Transportation Management. But it needs to be spelled out more for the higher ups. We need to overcome the challenges for each city of operating systems 24/7.

- Mike M. envisions taking this list of goals and making it a 3 page document that is more elaborative.
- Chris Mills (WSP) mentioned that it's great to hear all of these ideas. Cooperation, communication, and coordination of information is critical for regional system performance. What is the overall vision? There is more needed on how do we get there. Someone needs to talk to each locality, including decision makers, to communicate the message and get buy in. If they don't get it, it won't help us accomplish the goals.
- Brian F. mentioned that he wants to see a high level educational piece come out of this effort, not just for hardware but also personnel resources. He added that we also need to throw some costs in there. We can't talk to city leaders without cost information, and not just capital but also maintenance costs.
- Mike M. said that this document will probably be more iterative, especially as roles change at VDOT and in each locality.
- Steve H. asked if we are seeking to make this an all or nothing approval from each locality? Mike M. replied that it might be hard if each locality doesn't join in. Steve H. noted that in some areas across the U.S. not all localities join in for all goals.
- Mike M. mentioned that he wouldn't expect localities that just replaced their system to go out and get a new system tomorrow, but some cities have antiquated systems. Steve H. replied that we need to make that more clear for the higher ups. For example some goals may be short term, while others may be long term.
- Brian F. noted that if there is one weak link in the chain then you've got nothing, or everything may have changed by the time you get there. All links are important. Steve H. added that we won't be able handle interstate diversion in the region if some detectors aren't working.
- Randy C. noted that a big issue involves changing technology. It takes several years to change out systems, and by the time it happens it could be a different statewide system. Chris M. added that we need obsolescence plans, and a device modernization plan. Frank H. emphasized that we can't let that be a deterrent, or else we will never get anywhere. Obsolescence will happen but we still need to have the regional goal. We need to be able to communicate with each other.
- Mike M noted that VDOT has selected an open-ended, simple signal platform. Future software will come out that can still use the system. His concern isn't obsolescence but being ready for the private sector to be able to pull SPaT and other info off of the systems.
- Brian F. said that the question will come from the higher ups on how this relates to automated vehicles., and in Norfolk how this relates to transit. Mike M. replied that industry will be looking for SPaT data with as little comm time as possible. We'll be getting hit with that request in the near future. Brian F. believes that we will need this effort, even in an AV world.
- Mike M. asked if he had approval to go to the consultant to update the document.

- Ken C. mentioned that we need to put together a list that cities can agree to work towards, even if they don't get there quickly. We need to look to get something done that everybody has the ability to do. Mike M. responded that if we buy into the concept, do we want to vet with this group whether locality plans fit in? Ken C. replied that he wouldn't use the term "buy-in", but rather "concurrence" with the plan. The city can still do it even if HRTO doesn't give "buy-in".
- Mike Shawsiah (Virginia Beach) noted that we need common goals written down to have a path to move forward. We have to do something.
- Mike M. said that he would tell the consultant to fix the document to further elaborate each of the 9 goals, and how they help us meet regional goals. What does this document need to look like when I bring it back to the committee next month?
- Kamlesh Chowdary (HRT) asked what is the relevance for transit in this document? There needs to be a platform to possibly accommodate transit priority in the future, and transit vehicles must be able to communicate with the system. Brian F. replied that this shouldn't be an issue with the D4 platform.
- Brian F. mentioned that everybody needs to realize that funding is going to need to be available, and this document doesn't do this. Ken C. replied that it may not need to do it at this point. This point can be added later, but it's not ready to go to the higher ups yet. It will have to come together eventually.
- Brian F. mentioned that he can do a presentation at the next meeting related to these issues that he has prepared for Norfolk. He will send his presentation to Mike Miller.
- Mike M. said that based on today's discussion he will ask the consultant to add more information. He also wants the group to look at this more again before the next meeting. Especially goal #9, we need to expound on goal #9 more. Steve H. replied that we need to be sure to include what is in it for each locality. And possible benefits for goal #9.
- Sam Belfield (HRTPO) noted that we also need to let the higher ups know why the existing system isn't working. Steve H. added that he believes it will be a big surprise to many of them.
- Mike M. wrapped up by noting that we as a group will move forward. We will send out the updated document well in advance of the next HRTO meeting.

#### **4. HRTPO Update**

- Keith Nichols mentioned that this is the time of year when the CMAQ/RSTP candidate project solicitation process is normally opened. However, based on the amount of funding that is expected to be available and the amount of additional funding that is needed for projects that have already been approved for CMAQ or RSTP funding, there will not be a CMAQ/RSTP project solicitation process this year.

#### **5. For Your Information**

- Sam Belfield mentioned that RCTO meetings will be held this week on May 14th on the Southside and May 15th on the Peninsula.
- Ken Coody mentioned the VDOT Highway Automation Workshop that was held in the region on May 6<sup>th</sup>.

#### **6. Meeting Schedule**

- Keith Nichols asked the committee if the Monday meeting time still worked for the group. Those in attendance indicated that the time was good and shouldn't be changed.
- Committee members indicated that it would be beneficial to move HRTO meetings around to various localities so that they can provide tours of their Traffic Management Centers, or to locations such as the Monitor-Merrimac Bridge-Tunnel or Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel facilities. Keith indicated that he would get in touch with Robert Lewis and Frank Hickman in the near future about hosting future HRTO meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.