

ITEM #14: PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Members of the public are invited to address the HRTPO Board. Each speaker is limited to three minutes.

ITEM #15: SUBMITTED PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no submitted public comments. Any written public comments received after the preparation of this agenda will be distributed as a handout at the meeting.

ITEM #16: TRANSCRIBED PUBLIC COMMENTS FROM PREVIOUS HRTPO MEETING

The transcribed public comments from the May 19, 2016 HRTPO Board meeting are attached.

Attachment 16

**Transcribed Public Comments from the
May 19, 2016 HRTPO Board Meeting**

Four people requested to address the HRTPO Board at the May 19, 2016 Meeting. Chair Johnson asked them to limit their comments to three minutes.

Ms. Dianna Howard
VBTP, VBTA, TLP

Hello. I would like to speak on the 2040 Long-Range Plan, and I was on the CTAC Committee and I was one of the two people that voted against it, and to correct you, it was not because it was too little transit spending. I believe that the TPO inadequately represented all modes of transportation. My concern was with the two pages of studies that were in that. One of the concerns was once we're done with the studies do we have a reasonable expectation to be able to fund the project that we're doing the study on? Because if we don't we have to repeat that study, we're just wasting taxpayers money. The other objection was the - I think it was nine or ten light rail studies in there for Suffolk, Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Norfolk, Hampton, Newport News, and four I believe for Virginia Beach. Since I know my city council has not voted to extend light rail yet, they did vote to do the study on it, I was wondering if the rest of the cities had voted or not voted on light rail and why those studies were in there. One of the studies in there is a repeat of a study that we've already done. Virginia Beach already did the study from Newtown Road to the Oceanfront yet there's \$20 million in this budget to do that study over again and I felt that was a waste of taxpayer money. So that was my concern. So the question was how many City Councils voted on studying light rail or extending it and why if they hadn't are they in the 2040 Long-Range Plan? One of the answers was well; anybody can request a transportation project or a study. So these are maybe coming from outside groups, maybe from HRT or the Department of Rail and Transit or an individual person. If that's the case, I know Bob has come up here many times and spoken about doing a project for coastal flooding, I forget what it's called because he's not here, but he's been here like several years in a row now asking for that study to be done to prevent coastal flooding and it would go from about Willoughby Spit all the way up to Fort Monroe, and it would have some locks and channels. It had something to do with what they do in Holland to try and keep if their hurricane had rising waters you could shut these locks and prevent the water rising up. So anyway, my time is up.

Ms. Donna Sayegh
Portsmouth Citizen

I think it's what, good morning or afternoon. My name is Donna Sayegh and I live in Portsmouth. On your workshop agenda, you have a Commonwealth Transportation Board update. So you have a lot of updates from different departments, and I'm going to harp on this until I get some answers. I want to know how we're communicating with each other on this board with the city. I'm a citizen. I pay taxes. And I'm speaking for many citizens that pay taxes who are working and since I'm retired I can be here, but you have all these speaking things, I've got this HRTPO Board, and I want to know how everybody communicates with each other and I want to know wants coming to our city council so we the people know ahead of time. Y'all are making decisions without us knowing about it. So that's one of the things. Then you have some agenda items the TTAC Committee gave y'all information as agenda 18J, talking about the Pocahontas Trail Multimodal Corridor Project, and this project was not explained to an everyday person like me who and where is this going? And then it says the cost went from \$6.1 million to \$18.3 million. I do know an increase. I might not know what's it going to, but I know that when you say increased money, it's increased. And who is monitoring the taxpayers' money and the money from 1994? This is 20 years. We need to take a look at who is on this TTAC Committee, and by the way, how many people are using this trail? I want to know specifics. All right. Item 18K, VDOT wants to amend the 2015-18 Transportation Improvement Program to revise the cost estimate and funding obligation information for the Midtown Tunnel. Now, y'all, y'all created a toll for the people in Portsmouth. Let me tell you

something. You need to start talking to the people. You need to start talking to the people because those tolls have really hurt us. But y'all didn't talk about that. So okay so y'all, the debt service from \$498 million to \$579 million. This is taxpayers' money, and what caused such an increase to obtain a bond for this \$81 million. Item 18L. Gloucester County wants to transfer funds to complete a county project to cover costs increase, and it's talking about Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program. My time is up but I'm going to tell you, I want some communication in my city and y'all are making decisions without the citizens knowledge and that needs to change and I need to know how people are communicating with each other.

Mr. Frank Papcin
Virginia Beach Citizen

Good afternoon, gentlemen. It's me again. Smiling. I think I'm going to start off with a little bit of humor. We talk about regional flooding; we talk about sea level rise and all of this. Now, don't misunderstand me, I know there's flooding going on and I know it's getting worse, but I had -- I stick my nose in a lot of other people's business, and some of the general information I got because of my concern about the ports and about these ships coming in and the depth of the channel of 55 feet and how big boats and how transportation is all related but one of the little gems that I got from this individual from Chesapeake was and my question to him was with sea level rise, what's happening with the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel. Was that deeper water there and much to my surprise he said to me, he said, Well, we just did a study not too long ago where it's actually two inches higher than it was, and he gave me some year when they first built it. I thought I'd pass that onto you that with sea level rise, so does the tunnel. Anyways, getting back to more serious things, I got a copy of the budget, not your budget, but the state budget and it's showing a \$55.4 billion budget. I also noticed that while the Transportation Fund is an increase of 19.6 percent. The amount of money you people got decreased. One of the questions I wanted to ask was whether or not the \$168 million that we got with TTAC, with TAC was in addition to the \$305 million that we got from the government, from the state and they said, yeah, it's in addition. So that relieves one of my problems. Another problem I was addressing was whether or not these HOT lanes toll money was going to stay here or was going to leave and they brought that to court in Northern Virginia and they got it to stay within. You people are getting a memo. I don't know if you really want a memo or you want something solid because if they're going the run tolls here, and they're going to take money, let's not take it out of the region, let's keep it here in the region. And my other last point is I wanted to bring up is you're talking about the reversible lanes. Reversible lanes, tolls are to manage people, it's not to generate money, but it's to make people go in directions that you want them to go. Well, they're talking about HOV lanes on the reversible lanes, but when they designed the HOV-3 many years ago, which I suffered through all the construction of, they designed that road to have one lane exits, and they're going to need more than a one lane exit if they turn around and increase the traffic that's there because right now, there's backups on that road at times when 564 backs up, you got backups all the way up into the reversible lanes. My time is up and I won't exceed it, so thank you very much for putting up with me.

Mr. Ellis James
Norfolk Citizen

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. My name is Ellis W. James. I reside in the City of Norfolk. I have for quite a few years. Despite the attempts to suggest that sea level rise and flooding is not an important issue, I strongly commend to any of you who have not had a chance to flip through this report, pay close attention. You've heard from me and others occasionally that sea rise is speeding up. That's addressed in this report. And it may continue to speed up. 2100 isn't going to cut it for all of these communities that are impacted, and most of the impacts are going to be on the Peninsula side, on the Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Chesapeake side, Portsmouth and so on. We need to pay serious attention to this very comprehensive report. I was quite surprised – I picked it up, and I didn't flip through it at first and then I decided it was time to take a peek, and it got my attention. It is extremely comprehensive. I would invite all of the communities, as well as our military folks

and all of the rest that are represented around this table, 2100 is too late. We're in the midst of the beginnings of a very, very serious problem. Let me offer one last observation. While we're trying to cross this bridge to get to the point of dealing with recurrent flooding, there are some simple things that can be done. Every community around the table, including the military and the bases, understand clearly that there are simple things that can be done. An example, in my home city of Norfolk, when the flooding occurs and heavy storms occur, and the trucks try to come down the Hampton Boulevard Bridge, only to run head long into a couple of feet of water on the road beds, citizens are put at risk in that situation. Is there a solution? Yes, there is. We use mobile notice devices on our roadways telling us when the construction is going to start in the middle of June. We need to be able to address those critical sensitive areas by doing the simple thing, follow the weather reports the way Ellis James does.