

Transcribed Public Comments from the  
June 18, 2015 HRTPO Board Meeting

Three people requested to address the HRTPO Board at the June 18, 2015 Meeting. Chair Price asked them to limit their comments to three minutes.

**Mr. John Gergely**  
**Newport News Citizen**

*Good afternoon. This week the Virginian-Pilot published op-ed by Philip Shucet. He is certainly not a man without credentials in this room. He referenced the 2001 congestion study that the HRTPO developed and basically questioned why you have eliminated the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel from consideration from adding capacity to Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel. He made a darn good argument. Basically that study, it was commissioned to support the justify The Third Crossing but the HRBT won out as being the best way to reduce congestion. Mr. Shucet then made a good argument. He didn't list the other six studies that the HRTPO has commissioned since then, since 2009, many of you weren't here for any of those studies, but every one of them without question said the best way to reduce congestion around the HRBT is to add capacity to HRBT. Just every study you ever commissioned says that but you just ignored it, you just dropped it and this discussion with the HB2 prioritization, it brings to mind the prioritization study that y'all did in 2010, and there's articles in the paper about this HB2 prioritization, they mentioned tweaking if necessary, and tweaking is a funny word. It can just mean adjusting for things you didn't think of before, but it also can be some shadowy ideas. In the 2010 study, the HRBT was high above the best project for reducing congestion in the area, for bridge-tunnel projects, but shortly after that, another slide just appeared out of the air called the Third Crossing and it had a much higher score than the HRBT or anything else in the prioritization study, and no one would admit who named it Patriots Crossing, but it had a large score, down in the corner it had a little bitty thing says assumes 80 percent funding. Now, I had private conversations, and basically I was told by staff this is unofficial, it's just one of the mayors asked for the study as a what-if study, which is a logical thing to do, but shortly after, other slides with the same thing, the 80 percent disappeared or got down to real fine print you could barely read it and it was sold all of the area, it was done many presentations to many groups around town, and I firmly believe that that influenced the HRTPO to choose, to make your resolution for the Third crossing and this thing called Patriots Crossing. So tweaking is funny and what that brings to mind is the prioritization process and the prioritization process that the HRTAC is going to have to do to the project, it's only good if it's honest, it's only good if nobody screws with it after it's done, I question who is going to monitor and audit the prioritization process that you're doing and for the HB2. One other thing, you still don't print public comments in your minutes. It's certainly not for saving paper. I think what the public says to you should be printed in your minutes.*

**Mr. Ellis James**  
**Norfolk Citizen**

*Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman Price. My name is Ellis W. James. I reside in the City of Norfolk, and there are lots of things to talk about today in transportation, but I'd like to focus on just one item. May the 12th, Chamber of Commerce sent a letter that didn't arrive until June the 15th, concerning the proposed EPA ozone regulations. I hope that each of you will secure a copy and peruse it because there are some significant misrepresentations in this letter that I was astounded to see, and there are even references to the fact that individual automobile*

owners and drivers are going to have problems and serious costs and so on as a result of these new regulations. I know there are lots of people all over the country who are unhappy with EPA, but their reference in this particular letter to the fact that the national air quality standards have consistently improved since 1980 is significant to note. Many people and organizations had to fight tooth and nail to get some beginning of improvement in the air quality, and now those forces, same forces who were against that in the very beginning are now coming to the floor again to try to stop EPA requirements that will help us protect our seniors and our children and all of the residents and taxpayers. I hope that you will take the time. It's only a short two-pager. I hope you will take the time to look at it closely. You will find in the letter a list of a lot of organizations, not one single health oriented organization, no asthma association endorsement of their objection to the new standards. That is something that's very important. Thank you.

**Mr. Frank Papcin**  
**Virginia Beach Citizen**

Good afternoon, people. I've been here before. Usually I'd be running my mouth about hurry up and get the jobs done on I-64, I-264, blah, blah, blah. We need the roads. Today I'm going to do a little bit of a turn around. I have been reading HB2 and I read HB1887, and my question is this. We are in this area – Category A, which is the red area shown on there, which means according to the recommended factor weighing framework of June 2015, Category A congestion is the major thing, and the light rail through Virginia Beach does nothing for congestion as every single study has shown. Economic development, economic development claimed by the City is supposed to be where jobs are created, but although the economic develop land that the City already owns none of it is on light rail line, none of it, which means light rail will serve none of it, which means people wanting to go to work will have to, one, either get in their car and drive to light rail, rely on light rail, and then get another alternate means of transportation to their jobs, which means additional time away from their families, away from their work. It will take them longer to get there and longer to get home. So it brings back to another question. If HB2 is the law of the land and this project for light rail in the City of Virginia Beach does not meet the criteria, how did you people ever say yes to it? Because that's the point that I don't understand. It doesn't serve the purpose that it's stated, even in the environmental study done - giving that big 3,500 page book, which I didn't bring, I have it. Even that said that the expectations realized in this request by the City are not reasonable. Economic development can only be done when people want to move to a community with their business, and if their business is being saddled with the additional cost of operating a light rail system that does not serve the community that is an additional burden that they carry. Let's go to environmental projects, environmental things. All these park and ride positions that you're going to build, these are all areas that are not going to have what is the word, impervious surfaces, which means you're going to have runoff problems with water, you're going to have more flooding problems. There's my time anyways. There's many, many factors that were not taken into consideration with this project. A lot of people presented a lot of good information, and it was ignored, and I really wish you'd reconsider.