

ITEM #16: PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

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

ITEM #17: 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 #18: TRANSCRIBED PUBLIC COMMENTS FROM PREVIOUS HRTPO MEETING

The transcribed public comments from the June 16, 2016 HRTPO Board meeting are attached.

Attachment 18

**Transcribed Public Comments from the
June 16, 2016 HRTPO Board Meeting**

Three people requested to address the HRTPO Board at the June 16, 2016 Meeting. Chair Johnson asked them to limit their comments to three minutes.

Mr. Frank Papcin
Virginia Beach Citizen

Good morning, people. It's me again. Coming out with something slightly different. Basically, it's along the same lines. I read an article in the paper, no, actually, let me start off with, something that I found online from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, and it lists for your listening pleasure, Arlington and Fairfax as the largest weekly income cities in the nation. Average weekly wage Arlington \$1,686 a week, Fairfax, Virginia, at \$1,618 a week. And I really think VDOT must have saw this because of the fact that I also saw what they plan on doing with tolls up in Northern Virginia. Number one, they're going to increase the HOV 2 to HOV 3 and then they are going to make them HOT lanes and everybody is going to pay a toll which includes all the HOV 2 drivers. So now the people that will be paying tolls are the one and two drivers and three will get to ride free. But with the amount of money they make up there, I can understand them trying to grab as much as they can. One of the things that I could not find and I was looking for, was I seen that there's \$15 million coming out of the Transportation Fund that goes to pay for the Metro, and the Metro is having a really severe problem, but according to an article in the Washington Post, Metro says it won't ask for a local jurisdictions for more money, but on the same hand, I heard that the Governor is going to ask for regional tax increase, which brings me to the next thing. I'm looking at the budget for the Transportation Fund, Virginia Transportation Fund, at \$5.3 billion, of which \$1.3 billion is for roads, but if you look carefully, you see that the \$5.3 billion is a yearly number and the \$1.8 billion is over a six-year period. It's nice that figures sort of tell the truth, but in reality, they kind of lie to you. I mean, people get the impression that they're spending \$1.8 billion in one year when in reality you're not. Which brings me to the next line of thought. We have a regional tax that was anticipated to generate a certain amount of money and it didn't, and I'm running out of time and I didn't run out of mouth, but we have a regional tax that's not generating what it was supposed to generate, and it's up to our legislators to decide which way they're going to make up this money and get something done because we need these roads and we don't need them in 20 years, we need them now, and I'm for one never, never, never want tolls, and I can see judging by what's going on in Northern Virginia, tolls are heading our way and they're coming through the HOT lanes. Thank you.

Mr. Ellis James
Norfolk Citizen

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. My name is Ellis W. James. I reside at 2021 Kenlake Place in the City of Norfolk. I have been for a long time a very strong supporter of light rail, but over the last couple of weeks, I have been in some meetings in the City of Norfolk Planning Commission, informal City Council sessions, where a vision that disturbs me a little bit is being presented. It looks to me as if instead of extending the light rail in the Norfolk area to move from the medical complex area to ODU, to the port, to the Naval Air Station is now being replaced with a proposal to go to Sentara Leigh. Now, I have nothing against Sentara Leigh. They fought valiantly to help my daughter, who died back in October. They are a wonderful facility, but my concern is that we have some special needs that address the very issues that you've just finished getting reports on, and that is the flow of traffic, the backups and all of the rest. Now, I have no dog in this fight except that I live in Norfolk and I go to Sentara Leigh's medical complex a lot. The reference, one of the disturbing references that was made in the presentations was that, well, you know, in Chicago, they did this type of thing with the backing of the business community. Now, all of you ladies and gentlemen who are in the business community don't push the panic button. I am not anti-business, but we are not Chicago,

and I am always disturbed when I see a major project of this nature being put forward with that kind of reference, especially when I see that the implications of it may very well be and you all are the experts around the table, so I'll leave it to you to wrestle with it, but I am disturbed at the possibility that one project may interfere with a much needed project on the west side of Norfolk, and I don't want to see economic damage come to the Sentara general hospital area, EVMS, children's hospital; they're all national recognized facilities that do excellent work. And so I just -- I had this on my mind for a little bit and I wanted to share my concerns with you and call attention to what's developing or appears to be developing at this point. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Mr. Mark Geduldig-Yatrofsky
Portsmouth Citizen

Good morning, Madam Chair and honorable commissioners. Because of an admonition from President Thomas Jefferson, I have held back from commenting on the Long-Range Transportation Plan for 2040. My timeline, I don't believe, extends to 2040, and I do not want to be the dead hand of the past encroaching on the prerogatives of the living. However, as I look at the facts and figures having to do with the recommended transportation program, I'm deeply concerned, as somebody who is fiscally conservative, at the diminishing returns that appear to be coming out of increasing investments. We are drawing out a great deal of money from the pockets of the taxpayers of the Commonwealth for transportation and to see that the travel times are going to increase only a miniscule amount with a sizeable capital investment says to me that we are on the wrong track. We should be looking, I believe, at ways to increase utilization of existing facilities, increase the number of people per vehicle, and we should be looking at other behavioral improvements that we have not tackled, either regional or nationally. We need to look at changing the way people drive so that we work any competitive -- in a noncompetitive, in a cooperative fashion, rather than a dog eat dog competitive fashion. The thing that congests our roads more than any other is traffic accidents. They're really incidents. They are a failure of concentration; they are a failure of anticipation, and one stupid mistake on the part of a driver approaching a tunnel can cause a total gridlock for our water crossings, and significantly in other places that are critical that are choke points, similar inattention, lack of focus can do the same thing. So I know that we do have to maintain our infrastructure. That cost will not diminish, but we can do things that are less costly and more cost effective to improve the flow of traffic. Thank you very much.