

**Regional Connectors Study
Joint Steering (Policy) Committee & Working Group Meeting Minutes
August 9, 2022, 9:30 am**

Steering (Policy) Committee

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

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

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

No voting members of the Steering (Policy) Committee were absent.

Working Group

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

Tracy Jones-Schoenfeld (CH)
Bryan Stilley (NN)
John Stevenson (NO)
Carl Jackson (PO)
Jason Souders (SU)
Ric Lowman (VB)

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

James Mitchell (HA)

Others

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

Robert A. Crum, Jr. (HRTPO/HRPDC)	Megan Gribble (Virginia Beach)
Lesley Dobbins-Noble (USACE)	Steve Jones (Naval Station Norfolk)
Rick Dwyer (HRFFMA)	Chris Largy (Michael Baker Intl.)
Chris Gullickson (VPA)	Phil Lohr (STV)
Todd Halacy (VDOT)	

Karen McPherson (McPherson Consulting)
Albert Moor (Suffolk)
Barbara Nelson (VPA)
Kevin Page (HRTAC)
Lorna Parkins (Michael Baker Intl.)
Pavithra Parthasarathi (HRTPO)

Paul Prideaux (Michael Baker Intl.)

Camelia Ravanbakht (RCS Project Coordinator)
Mark Shea (Virginia Beach)
Earl Sorey (Chesapeake)
Stefanie Strachan (Hampton)
Joe Strange (Michael Baker Intl.)
Eric Stringfield (VDOT)
Cathie Vick (VPA)
James Wright (Portsmouth)

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

Michael King (Navy)
Tammy Leigh DeMent (PRR)
Naomi Stein (EPB)
Bill Thomas (Michael Baker Intl.)

1. Call to Order

Chair McKinley Price called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

2. Welcome and Introductions

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

3. Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

4. Minutes

The April 26, 2022 minutes were approved, with Mayor West making the motion and Mayor Glover seconding the motion.

5. Regional Connectors Study: Step 1: Qualitative Evaluation of Mandated Segments and Segment Bundling – Comments and Responses

Mr. Crum introduced this item by providing a quick review of the last meeting and noting that committee members were asked to provide comments to the consultant after the meeting. Mr. Crum added that many comments were submitted (which were included in today's agenda packet) and he thanked the committee for their participation.

Ms. Parkins started her presentation by noting that she will discuss the Qualitative Evaluation of Mandated Segments and Segment Bundling, Congestion Reduction Evaluation and Economic Impacts Analysis, and Public Participation Plan at today's meeting.

Ms. Parkins discussed the Phase 3 Process Graphic, and noted that the study is currently in Step 2 which includes the congestion reduction evaluation and revised design and cost estimation. At the end of Step 2 draft segments will be tiered, which will be followed by public meetings.

Ms. Parkins reminded the group of the definition of project segments vs. bundles, followed by how segments will be classified using tiers. Tier 1 will include segments that are ready for advancement and recommended for consideration in the HRTPO 2050 LRTP. Tier 2 will include segments which require further refinement, and will be recommended for consideration in the HRTPO 2050 Vision Plan. Tier 3 will include segments that due to technical challenges and uncertainties will be further developed at an appropriate time in the future.

Ms. Parkins detailed the comments that were received from committee members on the mandated segments. These comments include:

- The City of Portsmouth provided comments on the VA 164 Widening, including recommending further refinement of alignment assumptions, looking at local impacts and local opposition, analyzing stormwater management concerns, and incorporating Environmental Justice concerns.
- The Navy provided comments on the VA 164 Connector. These comments reflect the security requirements of the Navy Fuel Depot and fuel pipeline facilities, and also the strategic nature of both the Fuel Depot and the Colonial Pipeline.
- The Navy also provided comments on the I-564 Connector. These comments include the security requirements of the Navy Fuel Depot, height restrictions due to flight paths, security concerns at Gate 6 and at Piers 1-3, and changing assumptions for the ATI interchange along the I-564 Intermodal Connector.
- The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Operations provided comments on the VA 164 Connector. These included updated data on Craney Island, concerns on Craney Island operations, and Section 408 permit requirements.
- The USACE Regulatory also provided comments, including comments on independent utility, future permitting requirements, wetland impacts and remediation, Environmental Justice concerns, and endangered species evaluations.
- The Port of Virginia provided comments supportive of the VA 164 and I-564 Connectors. They also noted that security concerns can be resolved during later stages of project development after further planning and conceptual design.

Ms. Parkins added that it is very helpful to receive all of these comments, particularly for constructability, permitting, and readiness considerations. She added that responses to each comment were included in the agenda packet except for the comments received from the Port, which will be prepared shortly.

There were no questions or comments on this item.

6. Regional Connectors Study: Step 2 – Congestion Reduction Evaluation and Economic Impacts Analysis

Mr. Prideaux introduced the topic by noting that Michael Baker used the HRTPO 2045 Regional Travel Demand Model to test improvements. They looked at both regionwide results and results at key facilities, and also prepared a summary of economic results.

Mr. Prideaux discussed the segment bundles that were analyzed:

- Segment Bundle A is comprised of Segment 1a (I-664 north of College Drive).
- Segment Bundle B is comprised of Segment 1a (I-664 north of College Drive) and Segment 2 (VA 164)
- Segment Bundle C is comprised of Segment 1a (I-664 north of College Drive), Segment 4 (I-564 Connector), and Segment 5 (I-664 Connector)
- Segment Bundle D is comprised of Segment 1a (I-664 north of College Drive), Segment 2 (VA 164), Segment 3 (VA 164 Connector) and Segment 4 (I-564 Connector)

Mr. Prideaux noted that Segment 1b (I-664 south of College Drive) was included in the 2045 RCS Baseline Network, based on a decision made at the last RCS meeting.

Mr. Prideaux provided highlights on the congestion analysis for the regionwide results. He noted that total regional travel levels are similar for the 2045 baseline and all four bundles, but vehicle-hours of travel and delay are reduced with all four bundles as a result of reduced congestion. He also noted that Bundles C and D have the greatest benefit on vehicle-hours of travel and delay. Mr. Prideaux added that Bundles C and D have the largest reduction in the share of congested travel, which would lead to improved travel time reliability.

Mr. Prideaux added that cost estimates will be provided at the next meeting to provide insight on the cost-effectiveness of each segment.

Mr. Prideaux noted that congestion at 23 key locations was also examined and highlighted the results at some key locations including the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel, three Hampton Roads Harbor crossings, the Midtown and Downtown Tunnels, and Hampton Boulevard. Mr. Prideaux added that these results will help with the tiering of segments, which will be discussed at the next meeting.

Mr. Jackson asked if we could further determine whether Bundle C or Bundle D would have the greatest reduction in congestion. He expressed his concern that Bundle D has many more issues than Bundle C. Mr. Prideaux and Ms. Parkins replied that they would provide further analysis on these bundles with the upcoming cost effectiveness analysis.

Ms. Parkins provided a summary of the economic impact analysis. She highlighted the societal benefits of each Bundle in 2045 relative to the 2045 baseline conditions, and noted that Bundle D had the highest societal benefits, largely due to time and reliability savings. Ms. Parkins also highlighted the regional economic impact in 2045 relative to 2045 baseline conditions, in terms of increase in the Gross Regional Product. Bundle D has the most cumulative benefit, with most of that being due to impacts of Segment 1a.

Mayor Price asked if we are able to determine how certain potential large economic development projects that could increase housing and population levels would impact congestion. Ms. Parkins replied that this will be looked at as part of the scenario analysis, with the three scenarios of Greater Growth on the Water, in Urban Centers, and in Suburban Centers.

Mr. Crum mentioned the escalating costs of the HRBT project through the years and noted that there are costs associated with waiting. Mr. Crum asked if we can get into these costs of waiting in the RCS in terms of escalating construction costs. Mayor Price added that escalating costs through the years was also an issue for the CBBT project. Ms. Parkins replied that their team will think about how to represent this opportunity cost in the study.

Mr. Stringfield asked if all of the bundles include Bundle A, which improves the Monitor-Merrimac Memorial Bridge-Tunnel. Ms. Parkins replied that yes, all four bundles include

improvements at the tunnel. Ms. Parkins added that they have been coordinating with HRSD in terms of the proposed alignment of improvements to I-664.

Mayor Tuck asked about increasing costs and the ability to fund projects now versus years in the future. Mr. Crum replied that this is a conversation for this group to have with the HRTPO Board as the study progresses with costs provided by the consultant. Ms. Parkins added that there is about a year left remaining on the study, and then that question should be addressed in the HRTPO Long-Range transportation planning process.

7. Regional Connectors Study: Phase 3: Public Engagement Plan – Proposed Outreach Plan

Ms. Parkins introduced the proposed outreach plan by noting that strategies have changed due to the pandemic. She noted that the plan no longer is to take a preferred alternative to the public, but rather to take the tiering of projects to the public. The plan is now for a more hybrid approach. This will include four in-person meetings (Lower Peninsula, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Portsmouth), three pop-up meetings (including events spread out geographically), and more online engagement to reach those unable to attend in-person meetings.

Ms. Parkins highlighted maps showing demographics and transit routes to help with determining the four proposed meeting locations.

Mr. Stringfield asked about online engagement, and whether they are planning to run an online survey to accompany each public meeting or are they planning to run a single survey throughout the entire public involvement period. Ms. Parkins replied that public meetings will be on the front end of the public involvement period and that the survey will continue to be available afterward for the full public involvement period.

Mayor Glover noted that public meetings in that area of Portsmouth are typically held at Churchland High School, since it is a larger venue.

Ms. Parkins wrapped up the presentation by noting that a discussion of possible locations for pop-up meetings, such as at fall festivals, will be discussed at the next meeting.

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 is scheduled for September 27th. At this meeting, it is expected that there will be a discussion on recommended draft tiers.

10. Other Items of Interest

There were no other items of interest.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.