
**Mount Rogers Planning District Commission
Transportation Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes for Feb. 19, 2004**

Committee members present: Vice-Chairman John Boggs (City of Bristol), Jim Parlier (Smyth County), Jeff Evans (Carroll County), Harry Shupe (Bland County), Kim Hummel (TAC Secretary and Regional Planner, MRPDC).

Committee members absent: Jeff Sharpe, Tom Williams, Ralph Tuggle, Colin Peel.

Visitors : Robert Chandler and Rick Marano, both of VDOT, Dan Kegley, Smyth County News & Messenger.

1) Welcome and Introductions

John Boggs, vice-chairman, called the meeting to order at 11 a.m. Those present introduced themselves to the group.

2) Old Business

Committee members reviewed and unanimously approved the Oct. 1, 2003 meeting minutes.

3) New Business

a) Presentation by Rick Marano (VDOT Bristol District)

Mr. Marano works with bicycle and pedestrian trails planning in the district office. He described VDOT's policy of considering bicycle/pedestrian facilities for inclusion with road improvement projects. This applies to both new and existing roadways. Only 21% of localities in the state have comprehensive bike/ped plans. These plans are advantageous to localities because they help VDOT in its planning process and they help protect designated pathways for future development. VDOT likes to include bike/ped facilities in its regular roads improvement program. These plans can also be used as a basis for seeking Transportation Enhancement funds. It is advisable to include a wide range of groups in the planning process, including local government, local trails and biking groups, resource people, agencies, etc.

Bike/ped planning can be used to develop new trails, link existing facilities or simply to provide better access to existing facilities.

b) Transportation Scope of Work, 2004-2005

Ms. Hummel presented the proposed Scope of Work for rural transportation planning by the MRPDC. The program will cover some new items, including **Small Urban Area Transportation Plan 2030** updates, **VTRANS 2025** and **Safety Conscious** planning initiatives. The committee reviewed and approved this proposal for consideration by the MRPDC Executive Committee.

There was some discussion of the status of the Superlink transportation proposal that has been a consideration before TAC members for the past couple of years. Ms. Hummel indicated there has been no local government support of Superlink in either the Mount Rogers or the Cumberland Plateau region. There is no point in pursuing the Superlink idea further (Superlink was an idea proposed by Grayson County resident John Sauers to create a new highway from Grundy to Saltville to Adwolfe and then on to U.S. Route 58).

c) Resolution: Transportation Enhancement Funding

The committee reviewed and approved a proposed resolution developed by the MRPDC intended to improve funding procedures for TEA projects. Existing practices force projects to undergo several yearly grant rounds before they achieve full funding and can proceed to construction. The resolution will be presented to the MRPDC Executive Committee.

4) Other

- a) Election of officers: This was postponed until more TAC members are present.
- b) I-81 update (environmental review)

Ms. Hummel reported on the recent hearings in Abingdon and Wytheville on the scoping process underway to guide the environmental impact study of proposed improvements to Interstate 81. The environmental study will be handled in a two-step process (Tier I and Tier II) by a VDOT consultant (Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc.). VDOT has projected completion of the Tier I phase by the third quarter of 2005.

- c) Potential Grayson County project (secondary roads study)

Ms. Hummel reported on a proposal by the MRPDC to Grayson County for further study of its secondary road system. If Grayson County agrees, the MRPDC plans to submit a Grant Letter of Intent under the Rural Transportation Planning Assistance Program. Grayson County has expressed concerns about residential development in remote regions of the county and has been seeking tools to help discourage such development.

5) Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim E. Hummel

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TAC Secretary/Regional Planner