

FTAC Statement on HRTPO Prioritization Tool

The HRTPO has been developing a tool that serves to prioritize candidate transportation projects based on their technical merits and benefits. With scarce financial resources project prioritization is needed. The Freight Technical Advisory Committee (FTAC) has previously expressed support for the concept of a prioritization tool along with improvement suggestions throughout the development process. Key to that support was FTAC's recommendation that objective methodologies are used to prioritize projects and that the transportation infrastructure is viewed as a system. Hampton Roads geography requires that transportation is handled through a series of highways, bridges and tunnels. There are several key corridors that move commerce and commuters throughout the region and connect us to the rest of the U.S. Sustainable transportation improvements require that an entire system be improved to be effective otherwise bottlenecks are merely transferred to other locations.

HRTPO has released its "DRAFT Project Evaluation and Scoring" report dated December 2010. The Freight Transportation Advisory Committee (FTAC) has reviewed the latest report and the outputs from HRTPO's prioritization tool. A review and analysis of the report has resulted in further comments and recommendations from FTAC.

In summary, FTAC states that:

- The December report provides much clarity on the methodology used and the results generated from the model
- Revisions to scoring in previous drafts indicate progress towards objectivity continues to be made
- The results indicate that perhaps a dozen or so projects rise to the top as those where continued focus should be placed to develop a fiscally constrained Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Economic benefits that result from freight movement in Hampton Roads require that the needs for the major "corridors" into the region (I-64, US 58, US 460, US 13 and US 17) and mobility throughout the region be evaluated as systemic assets. Goods movement across the region requires that transportation infrastructure be viewed as "systems" to be improved.
- Identified projects next need to be broken into small, doable parts that can become "starts," and qualify for funding.
- Involvement of FTAC experts to identify and comment on freight-related projects is available.

and recommends that:

1. Appendix B: Project Dot Maps display the count of the trips that are forecasted to use the project represented by the dots

2. That information be provided for clarification and discussion on maintaining objectivity for:
 - a. Project Viability
 - i. The relative weighting of project readiness data such as; Environmental Decisions vs., ROD, vs. unsolicited PPTA, vs. PPTA approved for an Independent Review Panel (IRP)
 - b. Economic Vitality
 - i. The relative weighting of data used to score the economic benefit potential of the project such as; travel delay reductions vs. access to existing high density employment areas vs. access to new and emerging areas of employment density
 - ii. The method in which local comprehensive land use plans are used to assist in deriving the scoring criteria

The Freight Technical Advisory Committee (FTAC) is a subcommittee of the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) whose focus is on the transportation needs of freight as it moves along the major systems and corridors within and throughout Hampton Roads. This focus is aimed at the economic well-being of the region that results from free-flowing commerce based on predictability of on-time deliveries at reasonable costs.

As such, FTAC will work to prioritize freight-related projects deemed most critical for the 2034 LRTP in conjunction with the prioritization work being performed by the HRTPO.