

Review and Analysis of HRTPO Prioritization

HRTPO published an updated draft of the Hampton Roads Prioritization of Transportation Projects “Evaluation and Scoring,” dated December 2010.

We have reviewed the document and submit the following review for FTAC committee members:

1. A summary of the results and comments on key scores and methodology employed by HRTPO
2. A revised statement from FTAC on the status of the prioritization effort
3. A draft resolution for the consideration of the committee
4. The draft document published by HRTPO

Summary of prioritization draft:

The draft outputs now provide one score for each project. The highest possible score is 300. The score was arrived at by totaling the individual scores each project receives for project utility, viability and economic vitality. Projects are ranked based on those scores within the following project categories:

- Highways
 - Interstate
 - Primary
 - Secondary
 - Urban
- Bridge and Tunnel
 - Interstate
 - Primary
- Multimodal Passenger
- Intermodal
- Interchange
- Transit

About 150 projects were reviewed. Seven projects received a score over 200.

1. Midtown Tunnel	242
2. Dominion Boulevard	216
3. HRBT (8 Lane)	208
4. Virginia Beach Fixed Guide-way Transit	204
5. Third Crossing (Partial 564 to 164)	203
6. Route 17 in York	202
7. Third Crossing (Complete Project)	201

The Midtown Tunnel, HRBT (8 lane) and Third Crossing projects are of particular importance to freight movement as the region maintains or improves its competitiveness. The Third Crossing and/or HRBT add capacity to the limited pipelines or corridors connecting the region to the rest of the country. The Midtown Tunnel adds capacity between international cargo handled in Norfolk and Portsmouth.

Eighteen more projects received a score over 170. Thirteen of these were varying versions of HRBT or Third Crossing projects, an extension of MLK for the Midtown Tunnel, Interchanges or urban roads and a fixed guide-way transit project. The remaining five projects are of particular importance to the movement of freight.

1. Craney Island Access Road	189
2. US 460 relocation	187
3. US 58 (bypass to Manning Road)	180
4. Southeastern Parkway	180
5. I-64 Widening (Peninsula)	178

The review of the scoring methodology and outputs shows that more objectivity appears to be occurring although more is needed. We first point out that perhaps at this point FTAC might support and the region might be swayed to whittle prioritization and funding to a manageable discussion focused on the 12 projects previously listed.

Utility Score:

A review of the utility score (congestion relief, capacity added, safety and cost/use) appears to be technically and mathematically sound.

Viability Score:

The viability scores seem to be ranked somewhat logically but questions arise on the weighting or scores applied to certain aspects of a projects viability. For FTAC consideration and discussion with HRTPO staff at the next meeting is the following:

The project scores highlighted several criteria or data points considered to arrive at scores. It is not visible on how scores were determined for each of the following:

1. A completed EIS
2. A record of decision
3. An unsolicited PPTA proposal
4. A vetted PPTA proposal moving to an IRP (state sponsored Independent Review Panel)
5. Partial funding
6. In the Six Year Plan
7. Environmental review terminated by FHWA

With the exception of the Midtown Tunnel (242) the score range between the twelve referenced projects is 38. The viability scores for these projects range from 18 to 80.

Economic Vitality:

Economic Vitality continues to have the appearance of retaining the most subjectivity. Scores of the twelve project listed generated economic vitality scores with a range between 34 and 100.

The economic vitality score outputs are provided below.

1. Third Crossing (Partial 564 to 164)	100
2. Third Crossing (Complete Project)	100
3. HRBT (8 Lane)	95
4. Virginia Beach Fixed Guide-way Transit	94
5. Midtown Tunnel	82
6. Southeastern Parkway	80
7. I-64 Widening (Peninsula)	75
8. Craney Island Access Road	60
9. US 460 relocation	53
10. Dominion Boulevard	45
11. Route 17 in York	40
12. US 58 (bypass to Manning Road)	34

When these scores are considered:

- in comparison to each other and
- from the perspective of freight movement and
- generating economic benefits,

the concerns regarding the subjectivity of scoring economic vitality remain but can be expressed economically:

1. Weighting future growth compared to access to existing economic activity should be discussed. For freight movement this is highlighted by the positions of the US 460 and Craney Island Access projects.
2. Additional capacity across the harbor is shown as having the highest economic impact and is supported by previous research and analysis
3. While the review provided to date has not singled out a particular project, if the Southeastern Parkway environmental review was terminated by FHWA should it be removed as a viable project for prioritization?

As shown below (and only counting the Third Crossing once) the costs published by the HRTPO for these twelve projects exceed \$17 billion. This is more than seven times the forecasted funding that will be available over the next twenty years.

1. Third Crossing (Partial 564 to 164)	\$2.1
2. Third Crossing (Complete Project)	\$5.4
3. HRBT (8 Lane)	\$4.5
4. Virginia Beach Fixed Guide-way Transit	\$? – TBD by HRTPO
5. Midtown Tunnel	\$1.3
6. Southeastern Parkway	\$2.5
7. I-64 Widening (Peninsula)	\$0.8
8. Craney Island Access Road	\$0.4
9. US 460 relocation	\$2.7
10. Dominion Boulevard	\$0.4
11. Route 17 in York	\$0.06
12. US 58 (bypass to Manning Road)	\$? Not in HRTPO output

Conclusion:

In considering the mission of FTAC and the direction of the committee, staff has reviewed the prioritization and provides the committee with the following:

1. Much improvement has been made in the prioritization process
2. The goal is to construct projects based on merit
 - a. It may now be timely to limit the discussion to a dozen projects or less
 - b. It is time to add funding constraints, breaking projects into smaller fundable pieces, additional sources of revenues, PPTA's and Tolling Authorities into the discussion
3. Actions to remove subjectivity from the process should continue
4. FTAC should continue to actively participate in the process and promote the economic benefits that occur when freight movement in a region with; one of the largest international gateways on the east coast, major shipbuilding and construction activity, coal exports and other good movements is considered in the project funding process