

June 8, 2010

The Honorable Chairman Will Sessoms
HRTPO
723 Woodlake Drive
Chesapeake, VA 23320

Dear Mr. Chairman,

At the May 20, 2010 meeting of the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization's Freight Transportation Advisory Committee (FTAC), Ms. Camelia Ravanbakht and Mr. Greg Grootendorst presented an overview of the HRTPO's Prioritization Tool with a primary focus on the Economic Vitality portion of the Tool. The FTAC reviewed the Tool and discussed its potential in helping the TPO to determine which projects would best benefit regional transportation needs.

The FTAC strongly endorses the concept of an objective method to prioritize projects, although we do not yet have a firm understanding of how all of the various model criteria work together to ensure that it identifies the most important *regional* projects so they can be advanced by the TPO.

We understand that the Prioritization Tool will be used to rank projects for the 2034 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The FTAC discussed the importance of the model inputs and the major effect they will have on the resultant regional project priorities. For example, determining whether projects do or do not benefit the super sector industries (tourism, military, Port); and also determining what is or is not a "designated growth area" are examples of inputs that need careful review and consideration.

The FTAC respectfully requests to be briefed regularly as the Tool is advanced and as the Long Range Plan prioritization process proceeds and offers assistance and professional freight advice to help refine the model. Our Committee is particularly interested in being briefed on specific inputs for the projects and seeing trial runs of the model.

The FTAC members recommend that every effort be made to keep the model inputs objective so that project outputs (priority rankings) are merit-based for the TPO's use and, if kept objective, believes that the Prioritization Tool has great potential as a significant asset to advance regional transportation needs.

Sincerely,



Bill Bell
FTAC Co-Chair