

AGENDA ITEM #7: HAMPTON ROADS 2030 LRTP AND FY 2009-2012 TIP AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY

SUBJECT:

A report documenting the process and results of a federally-required air quality conformity analysis for the amended 2030 LRTP and FY 2009-2012 TIP has been completed by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). The analysis has been completed and all applicable regulatory requirements, including the emission budget tests, have been shown to be satisfied.

BACKGROUND:

In December 2009, the HRTPO Board acted to amend the Hampton Roads 2030 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). These amendments were made to remove previously-assumed Hampton Roads Transportation Authority (HRTA) funds and to add projects to the plan to compete for potential Federal stimulus and transit grants. The project changes were finalized following the announcement of results for federal stimulus funding in February 2010. In addition, amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) were incorporated to reflect the latest project schedules and analysis year.

Federal regulations require areas in nonattainment or maintenance of one or more of the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) to conduct conformity analyses to show that transportation plans and programs when amended or updated still “conform” with air quality plans and will not therefore worsen air quality. As the Hampton Roads area is in maintenance for the ozone NAAQS, the federal conformity requirements apply. To meet these requirements, emission forecasts must be shown to be less than or equal to the budgets specified in the Maintenance Plan for ozone. The maintenance plan was developed in 2007 to meet federal Clean Air Act requirements by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality working with the Hampton Roads Air Quality Committee.

The requisite conformity analysis was initiated with an inter-agency consultation group meeting on April 7, 2010 to review the selection of the latest emission model and planning assumptions and project lists for analysis. The analysis has been completed and all applicable regulatory requirements, including the emission budget tests, have been shown to be satisfied for the 2030 LRTP and FY 2009-2012 TIP as amended.

Two public review periods of two weeks each have been undertaken. Between April 7 and April 21, 2010, a public review of the list of projects, subject to air quality conformity, occurred. A public review of the draft air quality conformity analysis and its recommendation for a finding of conformity occurred between May 26 and June 9, 2010. Comments were considered and responses provided.

The Transportation Technical Advisory Committee has recommended approval of the report.

Enclosure 7 – Hampton Roads, Virginia Eight-Hour Ozone Maintenance Area Transportation Conformity Analysis 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan and FY 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program: Executive Summary

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve the report.

STAFF COMMENTARY:

The full report is lengthy at over 200 pages. To facilitate mailing, it was not included in the agenda. If a copy of the full report is desired, HRTPO staff will provide a copy by request. Furthermore, upon approval, the final analysis will be submitted by VDOT to the US DOT (FHWA Richmond office) along with a letter from the HRTPO certifying its approval of the analysis and finding of conformity. The conformity process is expected to be completed in August 2010 following a US DOT review in consultation with the US Environmental Protection Agency.