



Commonwealth Transportation Board Environmental Subcommittee

VDOT Central Office
1221 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia

January 16, 2024
Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m.

Members of the Subcommittee in attendance: Mark Merrill and Linda Green.

Welcome

Chris Swanson, VDOT Environmental Division Director, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Approval of September 2023 minutes

Minutes approved.

Land Stewardship

Chris Berg, Office of Transportation Sustainability (OTS) Director, provided an update on the Department's successful grant application for the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Wildlife Corridor Pilot Program (WCPP) authorized by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The grant award will support the project 'Prioritizing Wildlife Crossing Locations in Virginia', which will address gaps and recommended actions from Virginia's Wildlife Corridor Action Plan by more accurately identifying and prioritizing potential locations for wildlife crossings to improve driver safety.

Mr. Swanson shared that the prioritization of wildlife crossing projects is also intended to meet the intent of Code of Virginia § 29.1-579.

Mr. Berg also provided an update on the Department's successful grant application for the FHWA's Culvert Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) Program for the project 'Route 648 Culvert Replacement over Mud Creek'. The project will pilot the installation of larger culverts to increase hydraulic capacity to improve fish passage and address ongoing maintenance needs.

Mr. Merrill and Ms. Green asked about the applicability of AOP for other projects and areas of the state. Mr. Berg indicated that although the federal Culvert AOP program is limited to anadromous fish habitat in coastal areas, OTS's focus for AOP is statewide and lessons learned from the grant project will inform potential efforts in other regions.

Decarbonization

Mr. Berg provided an update on the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) established under the IJJA and the Carbon Reduction Strategy (CRS) required under the CRP, which is currently under review by FHWA. Mr. Merrill asked if the CRS has been made available. Mr. Berg indicated VDOT's intent to share the CRS once it has been approved by FHWA, and that VDOT would explore making a draft available for review by the CTB. Mr. Berg shared that VDOT has applied initial CRP funding to support existing CRP-eligible projects, including bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, carpool, vanpool, and park and ride support, and transit infrastructure.

Mr. Berg also provided an update on the implementation of the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Program, and the evaluation of applications to build electric vehicle charging stations under VDOT's NEVI Phase 1-A Request for Applications (RFA).

Mr. Merrill and Ms. Green asked about the types of applicants and location types in response to the RFA. Mr. Berg shared that applicants included national businesses and local franchisees, and that station locations included a mix of fueling stations/travel centers, restaurants, grocery stores, hotels, and other businesses.

Mr. Berg shared that VDOT is finalizing proposed awardees for Phase 1-A of the NEVI program to be announced in February or March 2024, and is finalizing target areas for Phase 1-B to be announced in the spring of 2024.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

Next Meeting

Tentatively April 2024.

Public Comment

No public comments were received.



LAND STEWARDSHIP GRANT AWARDS

Commonwealth Transportation Board
Environmental Subcommittee


| Chris Berg, Director of Sustainability

January 16, 2024

Wildlife Corridor Pilot Program (WCPP)


- Authorized by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)
- WCPP funds planning and construction projects to reduce Wildlife Vehicle Collisions (WVCs) while improving habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species
- VDOT partnered with Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR), Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and Department of Forestry (DOF) to develop the state's first Wildlife Corridor Action Plan (WCAP) in 2022
 - WCAP called for additional analysis to fill data gaps and refine WCAP opportunity areas
- **In December 2023 VDOT was awarded \$604k for 'Prioritizing Wildlife Crossing Locations in Virginia, a Planning Study to Support Virginia's WCAP'**

Prioritizing Wildlife Crossing Locations in Virginia



**Fiscal Years 2022-2023
Wildlife Crossings Pilot
Program**

Prioritizing Wildlife Crossing Locations in Virginia, a Planning Study to Support Virginia's Wildlife Corridor Action Plan



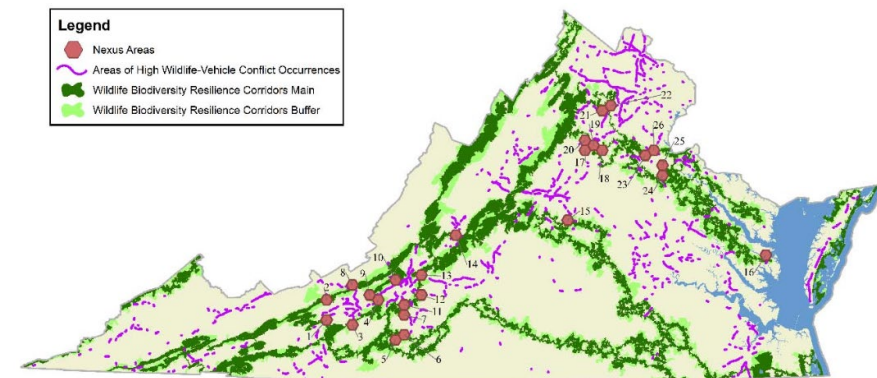
August 2023

For 20.205 - Highway Planning and Construction
Discretionary Grant, Funding Opportunity
693JJ323NF00011

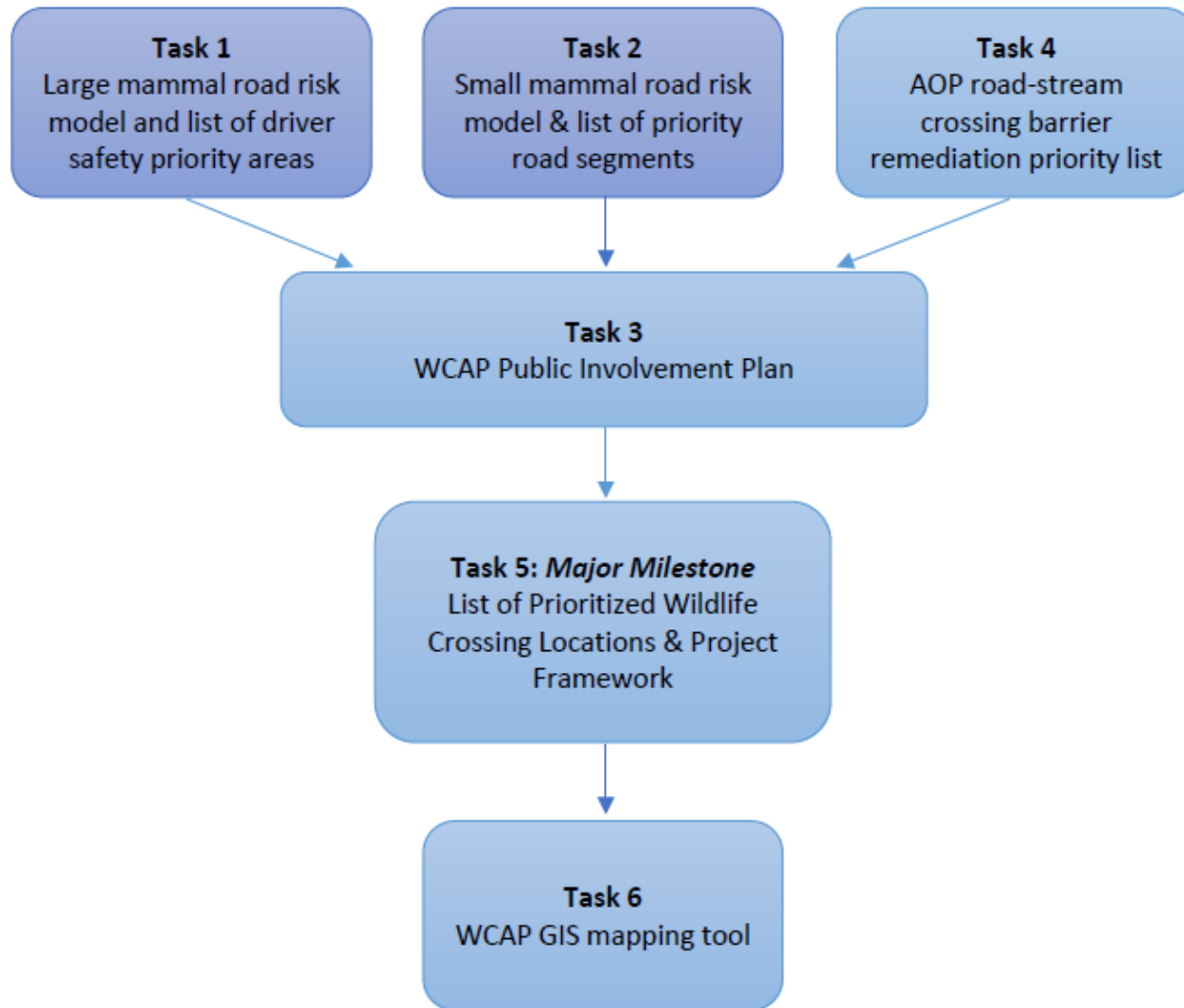
Prepared for: USDOT, FHWA for Fiscal Years (FY)
2022-2023 Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program
Submitted by: VDOT

Virginia Department of Transportation

- Multi-year planning study to more accurately identify potential locations for wildlife crossings
 - Data analysis, GIS mapping, modelling, cost-benefit analysis, and public outreach
- Partnership with DWR, DCR, and DOF
- Increase driver safety and improve wildlife corridor connectivity



Prioritizing Wildlife Crossing Locations in Virginia



Culvert Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) Program

- Authorized by IIJA
- Funds projects for the replacement, removal, and repair of culverts or weirs that meaningfully improve or restore fish passage for anadromous fish
 - Anadromous fish species are born in freshwater such as streams and rivers, spend most of their lives in the marine environment, and migrate back to freshwater to spawn
- VDOT evaluated existing culverts with identified maintenance needs, that were also identified as barriers to fish passage
- **VDOT was awarded \$434k for 'Route 648 Culvert Replacement over Mud Creek'**

Route 648 Culvert Replacement over Mud Creek

- Project will remove existing 24-inch pipe and replace with larger culverts
- Design and construction will consider the Federal Highway Administration's Design for Fish Passage at Roadway-Stream Crossings guidelines
- Larger culverts will increase hydraulic capacity and reduce flow velocity, providing improved aquatic organism passage



Route 648 Culvert Replacement over Mud Creek

- Project will connect 2.6 miles of tidal marsh and improve habitat for seven species of anadromous fish, including river herring and shad
- Project will also reduce road maintenance and improve structure resilience
- Project will serve as a pilot for applying AOP guidelines to existing VDOT infrastructure



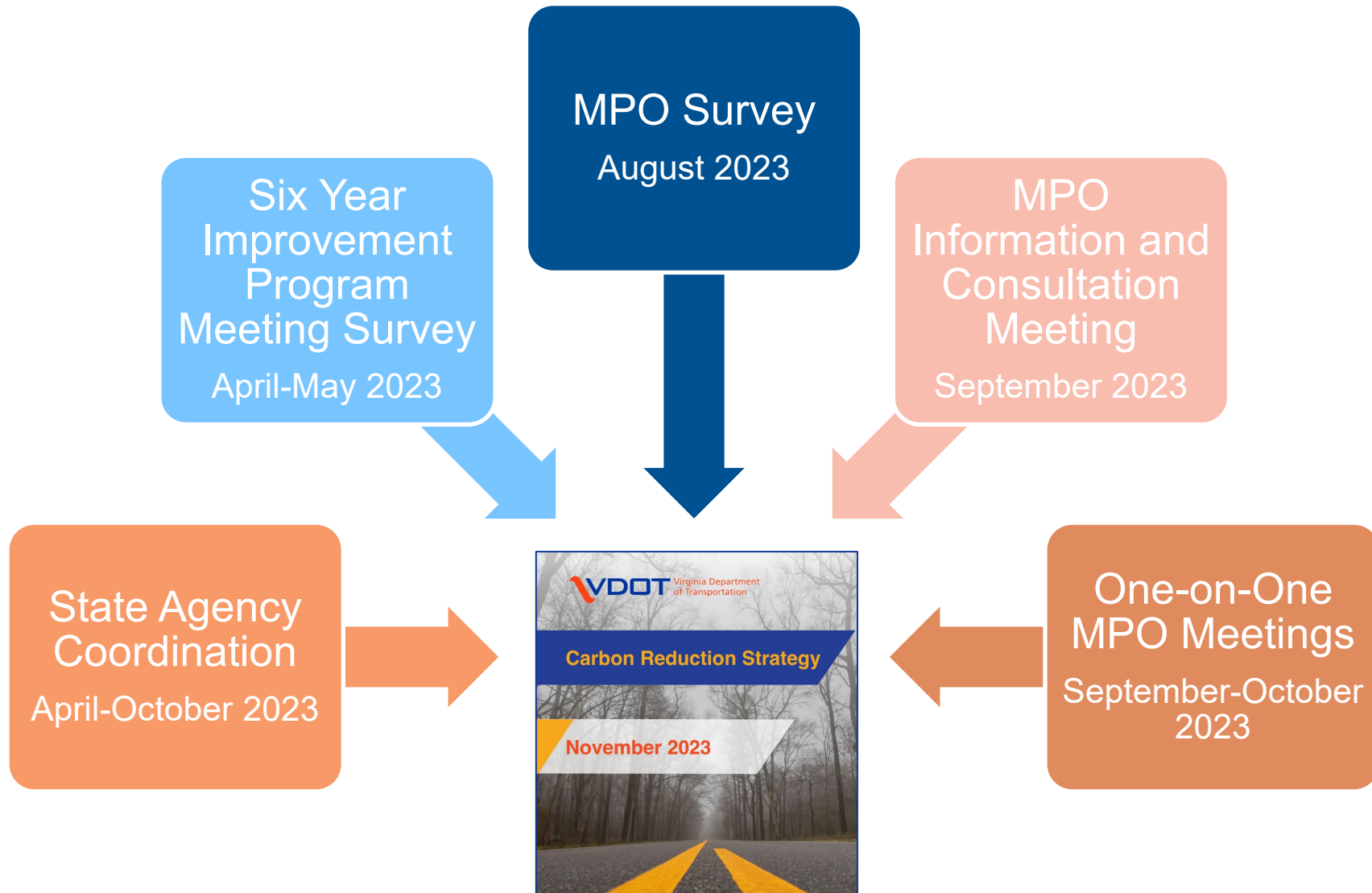
IJA CARBON REDUCTION PROGRAM UPDATE

Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) Review

- Authorized by IIJA
- Purpose is to reduce CO2 emissions from on-road highway sources
- \$166M allocation for Virginia over 5 years
- Written Carbon Reduction Strategy (CRS) required



CRS Coordination and Consultation



Carbon Reduction Strategy

VDOT		CARBON REDUCTION STRATEGY	
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- CRS submitted to FHWA for review, currently pending approval
- Identifies strategies and projects to achieve emissions reductions and potential project co-benefits
- Provides tools and resources to support planning, analysis, and project selection
- Highlights additional funding sources

CRP Funding Allocation

- 65% of allocations must be obligated in certain areas of the state based on population
- 35% of funding can be obligated in any area of the state
- Initial VDOT funding targeted to existing CRP-eligible projects
 - Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
 - Carpool, vanpool, and park and ride support
 - Public transportation
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are overseeing MPO-allocated CRP funding



IIJA NATIONAL ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE (NEVI) PROGRAM UPDATE



Virginia Department of Transportation