

STATEMENT BY RUSSELL “MAC” LAFFERTY
TO MPO ON BEHALF OF CHART COMMITTEE

The CHART committee, by design, represents a broad cross-section of the Charlottesville and Albemarle community. At our June meeting, the committee discussed the merits, risks and pitfalls of the revived plans for a Western Bypass. In our discussion, we reached a strong consensus on two fundamental points:

- There is an urgent need to obtain more factual information, before approving or rejecting the Bypass; and
- We must excise—in the clearest and most well publicized manner—what is a dubious but still principal claim for the Bypass: that its benefits include the significant relief of current and future traffic congestion in the Charlottesville and Albemarle County Rt. 29 corridor.

Specifically, CHART recommends that the MPO seek much greater clarification from competent authorities on the following questions:

(1) What impact will the resurrection of the Bypass have on the post-2002 area transportation plans that have been developed for our region, including UNJAM, Places 29 and the other urgently needed investments in highways and transit that are reflected in the LRTP and the TIP?

(2) When Commonwealth officials speak of “reallocations” to finance the Bypass, what are the sources of such funds, and how will these altered funding streams affect the well-documented local, regional, or state transportation priorities that do not include the Bypass?

(3) What credible assurance can be made to the citizens of Charlottesville and Albemarle County that funding for the critical roadway, transit, pedestrian and bicycle projects that we have identified and prioritized will not be reduced or delayed—by either the reallocation of limited transportation funds or the imposition of new engineering obstacles associated with the Bypass?

(4) Given the growth and development changes in our community over the past two decades, can we still tout the Bypass as a cost-effective solution to any *local* transportation problem?

(5) Given recent (and prospective) changes in the region’s water supply plan and the relative absence of satisfactory deforestation analysis (on sedimentation, water quality, and air quality) in the existing Environmental Impact Statement (and Supplementary EIS), does the project require a new, updated, and more complete EIS?

Put simply, without a more realistic description of the true costs and benefits of the revived Bypass project and more precise assurances that the project will not impede other more highly prioritized transportation investments, the community represented by the CHART committee will not support the Western Bypass.

