

MINUTES
NVTC COMMISSION MEETING – MAY 8, 2015
GREENSBORO STATION CONFERENCE CENTER – MC LEAN, VIRGINIA

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chairman Snyder at 12:04 P.M.

Members Present

John Cook
John Foust
Jeff Greenfield
Catherine Hudgins
Mary Hynes
David LaRock
James LeMunyon
Jeff McKay
J. Randall Minchew
Jennifer Mitchell (DRPT Alternate)
Thomas D. Rust
Paul Smedberg
David F. Snyder

Members Absent

Richard Black
Sharon Bulova
Jim Corcoran
William Euille
Ken Reid
J. Walter Tejada
Jennifer Wexton

Staff Present

Doug Allen (VRE)
Karen Finucan Clarkson
Kelley Coyner
Rhonda Gilchrest
Scott Kalkwarf
David Koch
Kate Mattice
Aimee Perron Siebert (Hillbridge Group)
Coethia Quarles
Claire Randall
Joe Swartz (VRE)
Melissa Walker

Recognition of PRTC'S Executive Director

Chairman Snyder recognized Al Harf, who has been the Executive Director of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) since 1998. PRTC and NVTC, as co-owners of VRE, have worked together over the years to promote transit and contribute to VRE's growth. A resolution was prepared commending Mr. Harf on the occasion of his departure from PRTC for his leadership in promoting the regional transit network since 1998 through his service to PRTC, VRE, and the citizens of Northern Virginia and to the Commonwealth of Virginia.

On a motion by Mrs. Hynes and a second by Mr. Smedberg, the Commission unanimously adopted the resolution commending Mr. Harf for his service. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Cook, Foust, Greenfield, Hudgins, Hynes, LaRock, LeMunyon, McKay, Rust, Smedberg and Snyder.

On behalf of the Commission, Chairman Snyder presented a framed copy of the resolution to Mr. Harf.

Mr. Harf thanked the Commission and stated that this is only the second occasion over the past 16 years where he has been able to attend a NVTC meeting, since NVTC and PRTC hold their meetings on the same nights. He will now be able to attend more NVTC meetings and events. He has observed NVTC is a strong partner with VRE and a long standing transit champion. He salutes NVTC on its work, especially culminating with this morning's forum which was a marvelous event to spread the message that "Transit Means Business." Although he is leaving PRTC, he plans to stay in the region and will continue to be active in transit issues.

Minutes of NVTC's April 9, 2015 Meeting

Chairman Snyder stated that the minutes have been corrected (page 2, paragraph 4) to replace "CFA FY2016-FY2021" with "CFA FY2011-2016" for the corrected sentence to read:

"In regards to the Capital Funding Agreement (CFA), Mr. Downey explained that the recommendation is to keep the CFA for FY2011-FY2016 in place and not renew it now and take time during 2015 to revisit the capital program and its management and priorities and then adopt a CFA for FY 2017-2022."

Mrs. Hynes moved, with a second by Mr. Smedberg, to approve the amended minutes. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Cook, Foust, Greenfield, Hudgins, Hynes, LaRock, LeMunyon, McKay, Rust, Smedberg and Snyder.

Consent Agenda

Mrs. Hynes moved, with a second by Mr. McKay, to approve the following Consent Agenda:

- Approve the NVTC Annual Budget Process
- Authorize the Chairman to Submit Letters of Endorsement for NVTC Jurisdictions Seeking Funding Under the USDOT's 2015 TIGER Discretionary Grant Program

Delegate LeMunyon asked if there are copies of the TIGER Grant endorsement letters. Ms. Coyner explained that last year NVTC endorsed all NVTC jurisdiction's TIGER grant applications. This year USDOT's application deadline is June 4, 2015. Yesterday, NVTC received a request from Alexandria to endorse its TIGER grant application for the Potomac Yard Metrorail station. Mrs. Hynes stated that the rationale last year was since these are competitive grants and jurisdictions are only submitting projects that are already in the Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP), NVTC decided to support and endorse all these efforts in the spirit of leveraging where you can.

Ms. Mitchell arrived at 12:10 P.M.

Chairman Snyder stated that in the future, staff should include the letters with the requested action or distributed them electronically to Commissioners prior to sending them, when possible.

Delegate LeMunyon also asked if it would be helpful to synchronize NVTC's budget process with the General Assembly budget process, since the General Assembly does not finish its budget until March. NVTC's budget process calls for approval by January. Ms. Coyner stated that the jurisdictions requested that NVTC complete its budget no later than January so they can move forward with their budgets, since they fund NVTC's general and administrative budget. Chairman Snyder stated that NVTC wants to be responsive to the jurisdictions as well as to give the full Commission time to review the budget. Ms. Coyner noted that NVTC's budget could be amended to reflect changed circumstances.

The Commission then voted to approve the Consent Agenda and it passed. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Cook, Foust, Greenfield, Hudgins, Hynes, LaRock, McKay, Mitchell, Rust, Smedberg and Snyder. Delegate LeMunyon abstained.

Report of the Virginia Members of the WMATA Board of Directors

Mrs. Hynes observed staff did an excellent job on the summary, which brings the Commission up-to-date on WMATA issues. She gave an update on the Governance Committee and the search for a new General Manager/CEO. A few weeks ago, several WMATA Board Members suggested using an approach similar to what was done by MARTA where they brought in an outside firm to do a management audit to look at

management and business process issues to help guide the search for a new General Manager/CEO and then be the basis for the work plan for the new General Manager/CEO moving forward. The WMATA Board has decided to pursue a management audit. Next Thursday the Governance Committee will be looking at a scope of work for the audit, which will then move into a competitive bid process.

Mrs. Hynes also gave an update on the FY2014 audit financials. When Mr. Downey was here at the April 9th meeting, he stated he was hopeful that the audit would be completed by the end of April. She reported that this has not happened and does not have a new completion date. WMATA has weekly communications with the Chief Financial Officers of the jurisdictions to keep them up-to-date on the status of the audit. Everyone understands how critically important it is to get this audit completed. She stated that it will not be an unqualified opinion.

Mr. Cook asked if the WMATA Board has discussed issuing a plan of action regarding the issues raised in the audit financials rather than waiting and reacting after the audited financials are released. To acknowledge WMATA knows it has some problems and is committed to fixing them might reduce some of the apprehension of the public. Mrs. Hynes agreed. Mr. Cook stated that making a statement ahead of time could avoid potential problems.

Mr. McKay asked to what extent WMATA is linking the search for a new General Manager/CEO and what will be learned from the audit. Mrs. Hynes stated that the management audit is expected to launch in June and be completed by December or early January 2016. The issues embedded in the FY2014 audit are clearly delineated in FTA's Financial Management Oversight (FMO) report. She does not think there are more problems to be uncovered, but there are areas, such as staffing, salary, benefits, efficiency, that will be looked at within the management audit which is more performance and business practice related. Mr. McKay stated the management audit will be a great tool for the WMATA Board and the new General Manager/CEO.

In response to a question from Delegate LeMunyon, Mrs. Hynes stated that the search for a new General Manager/CEO has stopped and is on hold. Delegate LeMunyon asked if potential candidates will be briefed on these financial issues. Mrs. Hynes responded that the root of the FY2014 audit issues are outlined in the FMOA report and is a public document.

Delegate Rust asked if the General Manager/CEO search will be impacted by the management audit. Mrs. Hynes stated that the WMATA Board wants to make sure they are absolutely clear on the issues. By going through the scope of work, it will get the questions on the table. In the end, she thinks the final General Manager/CEO selection will be influenced by what is learned from the management audit. It is her guess that the General Manager/CEO will not be selected until after the management audit report is completed.

Delegate LeMunyon asked if it is still a possibility for the auditors to open up the FY2012 and FY2013 audits. Mrs. Hynes stated that she can't answer that since she is not a member of the Audit Committee. Delegate LeMunyon asked if this question could be

addressed at the June monthly meeting or whether additional information could be provided between meetings.

Executive Director Report

Chairman Snyder congratulated staff on their hard work on today's forum. The forum was a phenomenal event that brought together a scope and depth of expertise, including federal, state, local, business, government, and advocacy groups. He stated that as NVTC moves forward it will be critical to package this information and make it available. He asked staff to identify ways to make information available through its website and other venues. The question now is "what do we do next?"

Chairman Snyder stated that it is well documented that there is economic value to rail, especially VRE and Metrorail. For him, this forum solidified the concept of the importance of regional bus service especially for areas not dense enough to support rail and for the outlying regions. He stated there needs to be a real focus on connectivity. One answer isn't necessarily the right answer for the entire region. It is also important to employ technology more effectively. His roundtable talked about friction costs—if it takes too long to get information, people will go someplace else. In his view, the forum is only as effective as the action NVTC takes following it. He encouraged Commissioners to seriously think about how we take this and move forward to work with the federal, state, and regional governments as well as the private sector to address transportation needs of this region. The collective challenge is to make "transportation be transformative" as Congressman Connolly spoke about at the forum. Chairman Snyder asked staff to place a forum follow-up on the agenda for the next meeting.

Ms. Coyner stated that for everyone who attended the forum and for some who couldn't (registration had to be closed because of room capacity) will receive a thank you for their participation and will be asked to complete a survey as a follow-up. They will also have access to color copies of the case profile posters that were on display in the research area. She thanked NVTC staff, as well as DRPT, VDOT, congressional staff, and the research partners, for helping to make the forum a success.

Turning to the Executive Director Report, Ms. Coyner explained that the report is blue sheeted to provide up-to-date information on key issues, including Envision Route 7 Outreach, emergency planning, and TSDAC. The newsletter is now a stand-alone e-newsletter that will be sent out to a broader audience.

Ms. Coyner introduced Karen Finucan Clarkson, NVTC's new Communications and Outreach Manager, who started just over a month ago and jumped right in to support the virtual launch of the Envision Rt. 7 Outreach and today's Transit Means Business Forum.

Regarding TSDAC, Ms. Coyner stated that NVTC commented on the findings and recommendations of DRPT that no jurisdictions had experienced a loss in total transit capital assistance. DRPT's analysis also showed that as a result of the shift in the calculation of the state share from net to gross, NVTC's WMATA Compact jurisdictions will lose approximately \$5.2 million in state funds in FY2015. This is consistent with

NVTC's analysis. She stated NVTC staff will work with DRPT to address improvements in the state's transit capital funding program. Neither TSDAC nor DRPT sought action to address the impact of the shift from net to gross at this time. Instead, TSDAC will continue to monitor the operating and capital programs. The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) is expected to consider DRPT's report at its May meeting. Ms. Coyner stated that she will replace Al Harf as one of the two Virginia Transit Association representatives on TSDAC after he departs PRTC.

Ms. Coyner also highlighted that NVTC will be attending the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) meeting on May 19-20 in Northern Virginia.

Mr. McKay suggested taking the message of the forum to the VTA Conference. He stated everyone here agrees in the benefits of transit but there are big gaps in other parts of the Commonwealth who are not hearing the message on how important transit is to Northern Virginia and what that means to the other areas of the state. He asked how the message can be packaged statewide to people who do not look at transit the same way this region does.

Ms. Coyner stated that NVTC's Kate Mattice and David Koch are conducting a roundtable discussion on Transit Oriented Development in Small Communities at the VTA conference and it is a real opportunity to have these types of discussions. Delegate Rust will also be the keynote speaker for the VTA luncheon and will speak of the lessons he has learned about transit as a legislator. Ms. Coyner reported that following NVTC's forum, some of the business partners have agreed to work to make a statewide business network. Staff will look for other opportunities as well.

Mrs. Hynes suggested the VACO and VML conferences are venues that include people who don't experience transit the same as Northern Virginia. NVTC needs to continue to keep sharpening these types of messages for these types of conferences, including the impact of taxes to state revenue and how it benefits other regions of the Commonwealth.

Ms. Mitchell stated she wishes she could take the entire forum panel on tour with her throughout the state. Hearing the message from the business community is important. With no disrespect to VTA, it is a little like preaching to the choir. She agreed VACO and VML conferences are good venues. Mr. McKay agreed and stated it is important to address it from many different levels, including the business community and jurisdictional staff. He is sure other parts of the state don't package their transit message the same way Northern Virginia does and it may be helpful to hear the stories of the business communities in Northern Virginia and how important transit is to them. The VTA Annual Conference is the next statewide intersection of people. He agreed VACO and VML conferences are also good.

Ms. Coyner stated that at last year's VTA conference, NVTC organized a panel on Making the Business Case for Transit, which was the groundwork for today's forum. It would be easy to take the story/message and visuals from the forum to the VTA conference.

Washington, D.C. to Richmond High-Speed Rail Project

DRPT Director Mitchell introduced Emily Stock, Project Manager for the Washington, D.C. to Richmond High-Speed Rail Project (DC2RVA). DRPT is holding three public meetings in early June in Richmond, Fredericksburg and Alexandria to solicit public comment on the process that will be used to evaluate potential alternatives for improvements in the project corridor. The public open house in Alexandria is scheduled for June 1st at 5:00-7:30 P.M. at the Hilton Alexandria Old Town.

Ms. Stock reviewed the project overview and schedule. This project is part of the larger southeast rail initiative by the Federal Railroad Administration dating back to 1991 for the Washington, D.C. to Jacksonville, Florida rail corridor. Virginia is also working with Northern Carolina on the Richmond to Raleigh segment that is currently undergoing a Tier II NEPA assessment. The Washington, D.C. to Richmond section (123 miles) is undergoing a Tier II Environmental Impact Study (EIS). The message from Tier I, which was completed in 2002, is that it is important to make high speed rail a competitive option compared to automobile or air travel and to stay within the CSX rail corridor.

Ms. Stock stated that Tier II will include 30 percent engineering work, closely partnered with VRE, CSX, and Amtrak. This is a shared use corridor with freight rail, commuter rail, and intercity passenger rail. A number of improvements being considered are third track construction of the entire alignment, efficiency improvements, and stationary improvements. It is not a sealed corridor. The process will continue screening alternatives to identify a narrowed range of reasonable alternatives, which will be presented for comment at a third set of public meetings. Completion of the Tier II EIS is currently scheduled for late 2017.

Ms. Mitchell stated that DRPT is working closely with VRE to make sure there is coordination. This will be a very long-term plan to build the whole corridor with third rail to Northern Carolina and it will require substantial federal funding, which does not exist today. There is some state funding available and DRPT is also looking for ways to use intercity passenger rail funds to build out third track segments to reduce bottlenecked areas, especially in Richmond.

Delegate LeMunyon asked how much time will be saved with high-speed rail compared to current VRE times for the Alexandria to Fredericksburg segment. Ms. Stock replied the estimates are that it will save 30 minutes from Richmond to Washington, D.C. Further analysis on how much time will be saved for shorter segments will be generated during the service development and ridership and revenue analysis segments of the project. Mr. Allen stated that VRE runs currently up to 79 miles per hour on straight track. High-speed rail would reach up to 90 mph. VRE is working to put in island platforms to serve the third track, which will benefit VRE as well as any future high-speed rail service.

Delegate LeMunyon observed that high-speed service could divert passengers off VRE. Ms. Stock stated that these types of impacts will be part of the ridership and revenue analysis. Mr. Allen stated that VRE already has Amtrak trains that serve VRE passengers who buy additional Step-Up tickets. It supplements VRE service and VRE sees high-speed rail also complimenting VRE service.

Chairman Snyder stated that schedules would need to be carefully coordinated to not have duplicative service. He sees adding third track as a positive but hopes it will be worth the additional costs. He asked about NVTC's role in this project. Ms. Coyner stated that both PRTC and NVTC are parties to the EIS process now being conducted by the FRA. VRE is providing technical expertise. Chairman Snyder asked for periodic updates of the project.

Delegate Minchew arrived at 1:08 P.M.

Commonwealth and Regional Agency Reports

Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT). DRPT Director Mitchell stated that DRPT will be bringing the TSDAC recommendation to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) at the May 19-20 meetings. It is anticipated that there will be robust discussions on HB2 and I-66 at the CTB workshop. CTB also re-established its Rail Committee to provide DRPT a more detailed look at policies regarding the Rail Enhancement Fund (REF), which is primarily for freight rail improvements although the Commonwealth has in the past used funds for passenger rail improvements. VRE has also been a recipient of REF funding. The Rail Committee expects to bring a recommendation on possible legislative changes to the CTB in September with formal action by CTB in October.

In response to a question from Chairman Snyder, Ms. Coyner stated NVTC actively covers CTB meetings and is working with Nick Donohue on the HB2 workshop discussion. NVTC staff is also helping CTB member Scott Kasprowicz set up aerial tours for the members. Aimee Perron Seibert regularly staffs CTB meetings for NVTC.

Virginia Railway Express (VRE). Mr. Allen reported that VRE participated in a recent emergency drill conducted by Amtrak in the tunnel going into Union Station. On-time performance for the month of April was 94 percent for both lines and average daily ridership was just under 20,000. VRE is conducting its annual Meet the Management Events, with the next one scheduled for May 13th at L'Enfant Station. He invited Commissioners to participate. He announced Donna Boxer, VRE's Chief Financial Officer, received a Certificate of Achievement in Excellence in Financial Reporting (CAFR) from the Government Finance Officers Administration (GFOA). The Mobile Ticketing program will be rolled out to all passengers on May 15. He stated track work will be done on the Fredericksburg line and the Spotsylvania Station is expected to open this summer. He concluded his report by announcing that VRE kicked-off the Gainesville-Haymarket extension work with Norfolk Southern.

Chairman Snyder requested a discussion at a future NVTC meeting on cyber risk in new technology for Metro and VRE. If it is a real concern, then the region needs to figure out how to collectively address it. Mrs. Hynes stated that it is her understanding that the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments (WMCOG) is leading a conversation on this. Ms. Coyner stated staff will investigate and report back. Chairman Snyder stated

he is not looking for duplicative work, but the Commission should discuss this issue for VRE and Metro operations.

Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA). Mrs. Hynes reported that NVTA adopted its FY2015-FY2016 Two-Year Program consisting of 21 highway and 16 transit projects, totaling \$345.9 million. She also stated that NVTA is keeping some funds in reserve.

Delegate Rust stated he made a comment at NVTA that he has been told that if you take all the VDOT money and after taking off the top all projects already committed and approved for funding, VDOT has about \$400 million left for the entire Commonwealth. In comparison, NVTA allocated \$345.9 million for F2015-FY2016. For those that did not think the General Assembly did a good job on HB2313, here is the proof that it did. Delegate Minchew observed that he was impressed with how smooth the NVTA project selection process went.

FY2016-FY2012 Draft Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP)

Chairman Snyder reported that he presented NVTC's testimony on the SYIP to the Commonwealth Transportation Board at its public hearing. The testimony called for increased investment in Northern Virginia' regional transit network. He cited the strong relationship between high quality transit and economic vitality among other benefits of transit investment.

FY2014 NVTC Annual Transit Performance Update

Ms. Coyner stated that due to the lateness of the hour staff will forgo giving a full presentation, but Commissioners were provided with detailed visual charts. Overall, transit ridership declined in Northern Virginia between FY2013 and FY2014, although several transit agencies, notably Arlington's ART and Loudoun County Transit (LCT) commuter bus experienced ridership increases. The changes in ridership may be attributed to a number of factors, including the federal government shutdown in October 2013, a decrease in the commuter tax benefits in January 2014, and – in the case of Loudoun County Transit's growth – the acquisition of new bus routes not previously reported.

NVTC FY2015 Third Quarter Ridership Report

Delegate LeMunyon observed that without the Silver Line ridership increase, Metrorail ridership would be down. Ms. Coyner stated that this is attributable to many factors including the expiration of parity for the commuter benefit.

NVTC Annual Agenda

Ms. Coyner stated that the 2015 Annual Agenda provides a calendar of major issues to be addressed by the Commission at its monthly meetings. It will be updated each month. There were no questions.

Financial Items for March 2015

The financial reports were provided to Commissioners and there were no questions. Ms. Coyner reported that the auditors will be on-site at NVTC doing preliminary field work the first week of June. She also reported NVTC will close out the fiscal year in good shape.

Other Business

Delegate LeMunyon requested staff circulate to Commissioners the letter from Congressman Connolly and Congresswoman Comstock to Secretary Layne's about I-66 Inside and Outside the Beltway. Ms. Mitchell stated that DRPT met with the congressional delegation to brief them on the I-66 project. DRPT has done some redesign to minimize right-of-way issues. Ms. Coyner stated that the public meetings are tentatively being held on June 16 and June 17 in Alexandria and Fairfax. Mrs. Hynes observed that Arlington has meeting that conflicts with June 16. Ms. Mitchell and Ms. Coyner both offered to go back to VDOT and look at rescheduling.

Chairman Snyder encouraged Commissioners to attend the VTA Annual Conference on May 19-20 in Williamsburg. He will be participating in a panel on technology and use of data. Lisa Guthrie, VTA's Executive Director, welcomed Commissioners to attend. She provided a few highlights about the conference.

Adjournment

Mrs. Hynes moved, with a second by Mr. Cook, to adjourn. Without objection, Chairman Snyder adjourned the meeting at 1:25 P.M.

Approved this 4th day of June, 2015.

David F. Snyder
Chairman

Jeffrey McKay
Secretary-Treasurer