

MINUTES
NVTC COMMISSION MEETING – APRIL 6, 2017
NAVY LEAGUE BUILDING – FIRST FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Vice-Chairman Smedberg at 7:35 P.M.

Members Present

Katie Cristol
Christian Dorsey
Libby Garvey
Jeff Greenfield
David LaRock
James LeMunyon
Tim Lovain
Ron A. Meyer
Jennifer Mitchell (Alternate, Commonwealth of Virginia)
Paul Smedberg
David Snyder

Members Absent

David Albo
Sharon Bulova
John Cook
Jim Corcoran
Adam Ebbin
John Foust
Catherine Hudgins
Matt Letourneau
Jeff McKay
J. Randall Minchew
Jennifer Wexton

Staff Present

Karen Finucan Clarkson
Andrew D'huyvetter
Nobuhiko Daito
Rhonda Gilchrest
Dan Goldfarb
Patricia Happ
Scott Kalkwarf
Kate Mattice
Aimee Perron Siebert
Doug Allen (VRE)
Paul Dean (VRE)
Joe Swartz (VRE)

Opening Remarks

Vice-Chairman Smedberg stated that Chairman McKay and the other Fairfax County members cannot attend tonight's meeting due to a county budget hearing. He reminded Commissioners that the May 4th meeting will be held at the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce in Tysons.

Minutes of the March 2, 2017 NVTC Commission Meeting

Delegate LeMunyon moved, with a second by Ms. Cristol, to approve the minutes. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Cristol, Dorsey, Garvey, Greenfield, LaRock, LeMunyon, Lovain, Meyer, Mitchell, Smedberg and Snyder.

NVTC's Comments on the Six-Year Improvement Program

Ms. Mattice reminded Commissioners that at the March meeting, Delegate LeMunyon asked that the final version of NVTC's comments be brought back at the April meeting. She explained that since the draft Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) has yet to be released for comment and will unlikely not be released until after the May 3rd public meeting, NVTC's comments to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) focus on articulating priorities for dedicated and sustainable transit funding, opportunities to improve Metrorail, using toll revenues to expand travel choices, supporting ongoing rail investments in VRE, and what transit means for the business of Northern Virginia and the Commonwealth.

Mr. Snyder moved, with a second by Ms. Garvey, to approve NVTC's comments to the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

Mr. Meyer suggested referencing those significant transit projects in Northern Virginia that ranked highest under the Smart Scale program.

The Commission then voted on the motion and it passed. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Cristol, Dorsey, Garvey, Greenfield, LaRock, Lovain, Meyer, Mitchell, Smedberg and Snyder. Delegate LeMunyon abstained.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Mr. Dorsey reported the WMATA Board approved the FY2018 Operating Budget, FY2018-2023 Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and a one-year extension of the Capital Funding Agreement. Key features of the budget include fare increases, service cuts, management cuts, and subsidy increases. Some of the proposed bus route cuts were restored.

Mr. Smedberg announced the WMATA Board approved the Alexandria King Street Station improvements and construction should begin soon. This is currently Alexandria's busiest and largest station. He also reported that WMATA has appointed Geoffrey

Cherrington as Inspector General effective April 17, 2017. He stated that the WMATA Board will be holding an all-day retreat on April 13th.

Mr. Dorsey encouraged Commissioners to read the Vital Signs Report. On-time performance for bus, customer satisfaction, and safety and security are below target, but WMATA is meeting its target goals for elevator and escalator reliability. Fleet reliability is scoring higher than its target.

Delegate LeMunyon asked for an update on the 7000 series railcars. Mr. Dorsey stated that WMATA has procured approximately 350 railcars, which is about half of the full order to be completed by the end of FY2019. Not all of the railcars received are in service yet as some are still undergoing testing. WMATA is replacing the 1000 series cars and the 4000 series cars, which are the most unreliable.

In response to a question from Ms. Garvey, Mr. Dorsey stated WMATA is planning to hold a post-SafeTrack era celebration when the work is completed to invite riders back to the system. WMATA is also looking at other ways to incentivize customers to return. In response to a question from Delegate LeMunyon, Mr. Dorsey stated that SafeTrack is scheduled to be completed by June.

Department of Rail and Public Transportation

DRPT Director Mitchell encouraged Commissioners to read the written DRPT Report. She gave a brief update on the Metro Safety Commission. The MSC legislation was passed and signed by all three jurisdictions (Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia). Congress will also need to ratify it. It will go before the Senate Judiciary Committee in the next few weeks. The three jurisdictions are working closely together on mobilization efforts. The target is for the MSC to be certified by the Federal Transit Administration by the end of 2017.

Regarding Metro reform efforts, Ms. Mitchell stated that Governor McAuliffe recently announced a top-to-bottom review of the Metro system, which will be led by former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood. Maryland and the District of Columbia have been invited to participate. DRPT has also established a consulting team to conduct the analytical work. She hopes Mr. LaHood can come to a future NVTC meeting to address the Commission.

Delegate LeMunyon expressed his hope that the region does not take a “wait-and-see” approach and stop the work already being done, including the work of NVTC’s Governance and Personnel Committee. There needs to be a parallel approach.

In response to a question from Mr. Meyer, Ms. Mitchell explained that the Federal Transit Administration is temporarily withholding five percent of 5307 funds until the Metro Safety Commission is certified. The Commonwealth’s budget includes up to \$6.2 million for VDOT to provide loans to those affected Virginia transit agencies until the funding is restored.

Ms. Mitchell gave a brief update on the I-395 project. DRPT is in the process of completing the final report and will work with NVTC and PRTC on an agreement on how to structure and allocate the toll revenues to be used for transit projects. It is envisioned to be a coordinated effort between NVTC and PRTC.

Report from the Chairs of NVTC Committees

Ms. Cristol, Co-Chair of the Legislative and Policy Committee, gave a brief overview of the Legislative and Policy Committee meeting held prior to this meeting. The committee is sketching out a legislative strategy for next year's General Assembly Session. Over the course of the year, the committee will be preparing the 2018 NVTC Legislative and Policy Agenda for both the state and federal level. The focus will be on seeking sustainable federal, state and regional funding for WMATA, VRE and local transit agencies, the successful implementation of the Metro Safety Commission, and on legislative actions that support reforms identified through NVTC's Governance and Personnel Committee.

Mr. Greenfield, Co-Chair of the Legislative and Policy Committee, stated it is important to not lose sight of federal issues, especially in light of President Trump's proposed budget. He stated the Legislative and Policy Committee will meet again on June 1st at 6:00 P.M.

Ms. Mattice stated the Governance and Personnel Committee held its first meeting on March 7th to initiate scoping of its support to the Commonwealth on reforms to WMATA. The next meeting is scheduled for April 26th at 7:30 P.M. in NVTC's conference room.

Mr. Greenfield left the meeting at 8:04 P.M. and did not return.

Vice-Chairman Smedberg suggested shifting the VRE item to later in the agenda when Mr. Allen arrives. There were no objections.

Regional Fare Collection Program Update

Ms. Mattice stated that with the cancellation of WMATA's proposed New Electronic Payments Program (NEPP) regional transit providers quickly moved to scope and procure new fare collection solutions to address obsolete and unsupported technologies. NVTC is leading the regional implementation of replacement fare collection technologies for the local bus systems. She asked Patricia Happ, Project Manager of the Regional Fare Collection Program, to give a brief update on NVTC activities related to this program.

Ms. Happ noted that the regional fare payment system is rapidly approaching the end of its useful life. Following the cancellation of NEPP in April 2016, WMATA entered into a contract with CUBIC in December 2016 for hardware and software design, testing and equipment procurement to maintain an operational fare payment system for bus operators in the region. NVTC has coordinated this with the regional partners to ensure that the upgrades address the unique requirements of each entity. NVTC's efforts consist of three main activities, including farebox/DCU upgrade support, off-board fare collection, and next generation regional fare collection.

Ms. Happ stated that at the June 1st meeting, the Commission will be asked to take action on a new Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for coordination of technical analysis, test, funding, procurement support and administration for the Regional Fare Collection Program. A new MOA is necessary as the scope of the previous MOA between NVTC and the jurisdictions was focused on NEPP.

Vice-Chairman Smedberg observed that NVTC has a history of providing these kinds of services to its regional partners and this is a great example.

Mr. Meyer observed he recently heard a presentation by Panasonic about their work in Denver, Colorado on modern farebox technology as well as digitalized bus stops and kiosk that interact with smart phones (payments, route information, real-time data). He asked if public-private partnerships are being considered for the future. Lynn Rivers of Arlington County staff, stated that the county and VDOT are working with WMATA in partnership with the Federal City Council to look at public-private partnerships for off-vehicle fare collection.

Ms. Garvey asked if monthly passes are being considered. In her opinion, there is an appeal to a low-tech approach. Ms. Happ stated that these types of passes are under consideration as part of a larger fare media discussion with transit systems across the metropolitan region.

Regional Bus Performance Analysis

Vice-Chairman Smedberg stated that back in 2014, NVTC embarked on a region-wide effort to identify opportunities and gaps to improve the connectivity, accessibility and operational effectiveness of bus service. Ms. Mattice explained that the final analyses and recommendations for next steps will be presented to the Commission at its July meeting. She asked Dan Goldfarb to give a presentation on the results of the third set of performance metrics.

Mr. Goldfarb explained that the analyses focuses on four major performance metrics of transit service:

- 1) Bus Trip Characteristics – how much time, distance, and speed is the average bus trip in Northern Virginia?
- 2) Bus Service Coverage – what geographic areas of Northern Virginia are best covered by existing bus routes?
- 3) Job Accessibility by Bus Transit – how accessible by bus (time and distance) are jobs in Northern Virginia?
- 4) Bus Accessibility by Income Level – how are different income groups served by bus transit in Northern Virginia?

Mr. Goldfarb stated that metrics on quality of service looked at the average trip distance and the corresponding average speeds, and the average trip in vehicle travel time. The average in-vehicle travel time across the different types of bus service does not vary greatly. Local service, with frequent stops has an average trip travel time of 27 minutes. Commuter bus service, which is typically on motor coaches and covers long distances at

higher speeds, has an average trip travel time of 28 minutes. Express bus service which is like local bus service except for skip stop operations as well as closed door segments on freeways, has an average travel time of 31 minutes. The standard deviation between the types of service is less than two minutes. The small variance in the travel time is because commuters have a travel time budget and natural thresholds on how long they will commute. Although travel time is consistent between the types of service, the distance is not similar.

Mr. Goldfarb stated that the travel distance varies between type of service. Local service, with frequent stops has the shortest average trip travel distance equal to approximately six miles. Express service has an average trip travel distance equal to approximately 10 miles. Commuter bus service has an average trip travel distance of 13 miles. The average speed of express bus service is 18 mph, which is similar to typical light rail transit (LRT) or bus rapid transit (BRT) operating speeds. Commuter bus has an average operating speed of approximately 30 mph, which is typical of national trends for commuter rail speeds.

Mr. Goldfarb explained that most of the NVTC region has very good bus coverage. Bus coverage is determined by the number of people within a half mile of transit. Arlington County and the City of Alexandria have close to 100 percent coverage and have a similar percent of coverage as the District of Columbia. The outer jurisdictions of Fairfax County, City of Falls Church, City of Fairfax, Loudoun County, and for comparison purposes Prince William County have a lower number of people with access to bus service, as bus service coverage is a function of land use densities. Fairfax County, City of Falls Church, City of Fairfax have approximately 60 percent of the population within a half mile of bus service, while Loudoun and Prince William have under 20 percent. Although Fairfax County, City of Falls Church, City of Fairfax have only 60 percent of the population within a half mile of bus service, the number of people who have access to bus service is comparable to the population of the entire District of Columbia (approximately 700,000 people).

Mr. Goldfarb stated that bus provides access to many jobs in Northern Virginia. Approximately 90 percent of the jobs accessible by bus are within a 30 to 60-minute commute. In Northern Virginia, only three percent of the jobs accessible by bus are accessible within 15 minutes; ten percent of the jobs can be accessed by bus within 15 to 30 minutes. Close to 30 percent of the jobs are within 30 to 45 minutes. Arlington and Fairfax County have the highest number of jobs accessible by bus.

Mr. Goldfarb stated that next steps include coordinating with the Management Advisory Committee (MAC), developing recommendations, and reporting back to the Commission in the summer.

In response to a question by Ms. Garvey, Mr. Goldfarb stated that staff is looking at cross jurisdictional service and will work with the jurisdictions to identify those types of opportunities. Mr. Snyder stated that the real success or failure of this project will be measured by the extent to which cooperation can be achieved on closing the service gaps. He would like to see a list of gaps that can be closed. It is important then to take a step back and look at the region as one big system, with all the local bus systems and Metro combined, to see where it is functioning well and where improvements are needed.

He stated that this should be the goal of this project. Mr. Snyder asked if Commissioners had any objections and there were none.

Virginia Railway Express

Vice-Chairman Smedberg stated that there are no action items and asked Mr. Allen to give his presentation on VRE and the Role of the Commissions, as well as VRE's long-range plans as it relates to DRPT's Report on VRE 2040 System Plan Review.

Mr. Allen explained that the VRE Management Audit in 2015 recommended an annual presentation to the Commissions on the roles and responsibilities of the Commissions as they relate to VRE. NVTC and PRTC are co-owners of VRE. VRE serves Washington, D.C. and Virginia and provides commuter rail service on two lines (90-miles) carrying 19,000 daily trips. VRE is known for its safe operations, high customer satisfaction, quality service, reliable service, and strong partnerships with the host railroads.

Mr. Allen provided demographic information about its riders. VRE provides a significant value to the region during the rush hour. VRE carries 11 percent of the peak hour commuters crossing the Potomac into the District.

Mr. Allen reviewed how VRE is organized and governed. The Master Agreement established an Operations Board to coordinate development and operation of the service. The Commissions have delegated some authority to the Operations Board and consists of members from each of the jurisdictions that support VRE plus a designee of the CTB Chair. He reviewed the authority retained by the Commissions, as well as the authority delegated to the Operations Board. VRE is managed by a Chief Executive Officer, who is employed by both Commissions. There are currently 49 VRE staff members, who are technically employees of PRTC.

Mr. Allen reviewed the three phases of the VRE System Plan 2040. Phase I includes lengthening trains for additional capacity. Phase 2 and 3 include more trains, along with third/fourth tracks on CSXT, Long Bridge expansion, more parking and train storage. VRE's total five-year Capital Improvement Program includes \$2.1 billion for capital reserve, rolling stock, asset management and state-of-good-repair projects.

Mr. Allen stated that VRE's costs are growing faster than revenues and the transit capital fiscal cliff exacerbates the issue. Cost increases cannot be covered solely by fare increases and jurisdictional subsidy increases. No additional revenue will result in service cuts, which will impact loss of capacity in the I-95/395 and I-66 Corridors of Statewide Significance. The cost to replace this capacity with highway lanes would be astronomical.

Mr. Allen stated that HB30 in 2015 directed the CTB Rail Committee to review VRE's System Plan 2040 and other financial analysis. The review findings show that:

- VRE's methodology is consistent with industry standards and regional growth expectations;
- VRE's system is poised to see significant gains in ridership by 2040 proportional to the investments made per the plan;

- VRE operating expense levels fall within industry norms;
- VRE's Concerns regarding the long-term financial challenges are founded;
- VRE provides appropriately costed, efficient services that would attract increasing levels of ridership; and
- VRE has a significant positive effect on I-95/395 and I-66 traffic.

Mr. Allen stated that VRE plans to seek a legislative solution for additional funding during the General Assembly 2018 Session.

Delegate LeMunyon asked how VRE can reduce costs. Mr. Allen stated that VRE is always looking for ways to reduce costs, but many of the costs are tied to agreements (i.e. railroad access agreements). VRE is focused on maintenance so long-term costs can be reduced over the life-cycle of the equipment.

Mr. Meyer asked if combining the operating and maintenance contracts would result in a lower bid. Mr. Allen explained that VRE used to combine these two contracts. He does not think there would be significant savings since it would reduce competition.

In response to a question from Mr. Meyer, Mr. Allen reviewed VRE funding sources. Mr. Meyer observed that it seems that additional funding is needed by many transit agencies. Ms. Mitchell stated that the Legislative and Policy Committee discussed this at its meeting and there is a recognition that there are a lot of these issues occurring at the same time. Statewide transit funding cliff affects all statewide transit projects. WMATA needs additional funding. VRE needs additional funding for its long-term sustainability. It is important to look at it holistically. Ms. Cristol agreed that it is important to work collectively and not pit agencies against each other. Mr. Snyder agreed that it is important to work together and not be competitive. He observed that VRE carries 20,000 daily passengers while WMATA carries a combined 300,000 daily passengers by rail and bus. If each transit agency starts competing against each other, Northern Virginia has no hope.

Ms. Garvey asked about VRE service connections to MARC service. Mr. Allen stated that there have been preliminary discussions, but the Long Bridge Project needs to be completed first before any additional capacity is added. Ms. Mitchell stated that the Long Bridge connects the Southeast and Northeast corridors. Capacity is tapped out. In her opinion, the Long Bridge is a project of national significance.

Delegate LeMunyon asked if the Long Bridge project is a candidate for a public-private partnership. Ms. Mitchell agreed that this project will need to have a creative funding solution, which could be a public-private partnership. The NEPA study will be completed by 2019, which is looking at a number of alternatives.

Vice-Chairman Smedberg suggested staff schedule a more detailed presentation on the Long Bridge project at a meeting in the fall, since this is such a significant project.

Mr. Meyer observed that the Long Bridge may be a good project for the TPB Task Force to consider. Ms. Mitchell stated that it was also submitted for a federal infrastructure grant.

Executive Director Report

Ms. Mattice announced Dr. Nobuhito Daito is a new NVTC staff member. He received his doctorate in Public Policy from George Mason University had been a fellow at NVTC for the past year. As a program analyst, he is part of NVTC's analysis and planning group to support the regional bus, ridership, and economic impact analyses.

Ms. Mattice reviewed several upcoming events:

- Governance and Personnel Committee Meeting - Wednesday, April 26th at NVTC
- May 4th NVTC meeting at the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce
- Second Virginia WMATA Board Public Meeting – June 15th at the Durant Center in Alexandria
- Transform 66 Launch Event - in September/October in Falls Church

Vice-Chairman Smedberg noted that the Financial Report for February 2017 was provided to Commissioners. There were no comments.

Mr. Snyder asked for a report on the Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit at the next meeting.

Adjournment

Mr. Meyer moved, with a second by Ms. Cristol, to adjourn the meeting. Without objection, Vice-Chairman Smedberg adjourned the meeting at 9:02 P.M.

Approved this 4th day of May 2017.

Jeffrey C. McKay
Chairman

Matthew F. Letourneau
Secretary-Treasurer