



Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

CTB Rail Subcommittee Meeting

Minutes

January 17, 2017

Meeting began at 9:01 am.

CTB Rail Committee Members Present: Jennifer Mitchell, Scott Kasprovicz, Shannon Valentine, Mary Hughes-Hynes, and Court Rosen.

Director Jennifer Mitchell opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda. She informed the members that the single agenda item for the day was to review the progress of the Statewide Rail Plan, which DRPT has been directed to update and align with CTB's most current goals and objectives.

1. Virginia Rail Plan-Pete Burrus, DRPT Chief of Rail, opened up the presentation. He informed the Sub Committee that DRPT will be looking for their input on the progress of the plan on a monthly basis. The Final Rail Plan will be presented to the Full CTB in June.

Mike Todd, Rail Enhancement and Corridor Planning Manager for DRPT, began presenting. He explained that DRPT has been pulling together passenger and freight rail data and now needs input on this data to help with future planning. He discussed the different components of the plan, which will include a Base Economic Analysis by Region. This will help determine what the different industries are in each region and if they are conducive to rail. He shared that the FRA requires an Executive Summary which will be converted into a marketing piece that can be used to help make the case for more investment in rail.

Scott Kasprovicz asked if the report will include information on major trends, both in rail and other aspects of transportation, and show how they interact. Mike Todd shared that Chapter 2 of the Rail Plan must describe trends and forecasts for the growth in demand for freight and passenger rail service, so this section will address trends. Major trends will also be discussed in Chapter 1 of the plan, the "Role of Rail in Virginia", which will look at trends both in Virginia and Nationally.

Scott Kasprovicz asked if there is a requirement in this report to look at technology.

Mike Todd stated that there was not but that he will incorporate it. Scott asked that it be incorporated in everything moving forward and that it be outlined at the next meeting.

Scott Kasprovicz asked if the Economic Impact part of the report will look at the impact of lost rail. Mike Todd and Pete Burrus said they would be looking at abandonment, as well as other risks such as downgrades and reduced traffic.

Shannon Valentine asked how the Economic Impact of Rail in Virginia is determined. She asked how it gets measured and how that data can be translated so that it does not seem like a cost. Mike Todd shared that measurements in the TIGER grant program will be used as a model for measuring the Economic Impact of Rail. He shared that economic impact will be looked at both statewide and regionally.

Scott Kasprovicz asked if cost offsets are considered in the plan. **He would like to show what the cost would be to the public if rail service was downgraded or abandoned.**

Shannon Valentine asked if information was being pulled from localities. She stated that different regional plans could provide good input for the rail plan and vice versa. She cited the recent Lynchburg study, **which DRPT will review and update data regarding Intercity Passenger Rail service, and share the study with HDR Rail Plan team.**

Mike Todd asked the group to think about what their goals are for the coming years. Is it to focus on creating new services or promoting existing service? Should the plan focus on operations or adding more capacity? Should the core corridors be focused on or should rail service touch every part of the state? **Scott Kasprovicz replied that it is most important to focus on the core corridors.** Jennifer Mitchell stated that we are working with very limited resources and that our demands are to expand reach instead of improving the core. Shannon Valentine stated that if we make the case for the Economic Return of our investment in Rail, more funds could get allocated to rail projects and the resources wouldn't be as limited. Mary Hynes asked if there is a higher burden when funds are used in CoSS for projects that aren't high priority. Jennifer Mitchell cited VTRANS and CoSS screening process for Smartscale, and that the Rail Plan should include emphasis on CoSS. Shannon Valentine asked how the 29 corridor can provide relieve to the congested 95 corridor.

Scott Kasprovicz asked that other states around us are looked at so we can consider projects that might be shared.

Mike Todd asked the Subcommittee about what their investment priorities are in the coming years? He asked if there is a particular type of investment or specific project they want to prioritize? **Mary Hynes wants the priority to be state of good repair projects**

and making what we have work better. Jennifer Mitchell shared that Long Bridge is a key component of the Statewide Rail Plan. The success of any other investment hinges on its expansion.

Scott Kasprovicz asked about the purchase of lines subject to abandonment. Pete Burrus stated that the S line will be acquired, but that that is the only one out there for now.

Scott Kasprovicz asked that we look at neighbor states and what we can do to have synergy with their investments. Mike Todd said we do and will in the rail plan, including intermodal proximity; Mike noted Railroads don't operate on political boundaries. Pete mentioned the example of the intermodal facility planned in Rocky Mount on CSX.

On the discussion of how the state should influence local transit/rail/transportation investments, Mary Hynes said the state should leverage investments. Jennifer Mitchell cited the Newport News station investment where we can provide incentives, but not make local land use decisions. Shannon Valentine cited the success of the co-located train and bus facilities in Lynchburg.

On Investment priorities Mary Hynes says we should focus on state of good repair and make existing services better first. The CTB-R discussed limits of funding for State of Good Repair.

Shannon said we need to be aware of how we spend our dollars – road vs. rail, and understand the case for complimentary investments.

Mary Hynes said we need to clarify and lay ground work for a new conversation and change the current funding arrangement.

Jennifer discussed incremental improvements and priorities: reorient our priorities toward long bridge – all other projects south which are identified rely on long bridge to realize their additional capacity benefits.

Scott said the Rail Plan should look at national models for purchase of rail lines if railroads are abandoned.

In conclusion Mike Todd shared information from Chapter 4 of the Outreach Results Section of the Presentation. This part of the presentation shows Stakeholder responses to a series of questions asked that can help the Sub Committee with its input.

2. Public Comment-None given at this time

Adjourned at 9:55 am.