

CTB Rail and Transit Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
VDOT Central Office-HR Training Room
1221 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
8:30 am
December 10, 2019

The Meeting began at 8:33 am

CTB Rail Subcommittee Members Present: Ray Smoot, Mary Hynes, John Malbon and Stephen Johnsen.

1. Approval of October 16th Minutes-
Stephen Johnsen moved to approve the minutes. Mary Hynes seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved.
2. Director's Report-Chief of Transit Jennifer DeBruhl informed the Rail and Transit Subcommittee members that Director Mitchell would not be able to join them that morning because she was at the Governor's office providing a briefing. Chief of Rail Michael McLaughlin and Chief of Transit Jennifer DeBruhl each gave a report on the Director's behalf.
3. I-66 Corridor Study-Jennifer DeBruhl

Jennifer DeBruhl gave a presentation on the I-66 Transit and TDM plan. The following comments were noted.

- Mary Hynes said that when I-66 Outside the Beltway study was done, 800 million dollars of funding was included in the P3 for transit. Routes were identified for funding through the 2014 study. This update is part of the effort to deploy that funding. She said that one of the greatest accomplishments of these Public Private Partnerships is multimodal solutions.
- Stephen Johnsen asked if the I-66 money included money for rail. Jennifer DeBruhl said they were making that recommendation in this study.
- Stephen Johnsen asked if there was any effort to consolidate the I-66 and I-95 studies. Jennifer DeBruhl said that the same people are working on both studies at DRPT and are coordinating efforts. She said that the I-66 project does include construction that would add lanes and that is not an option on I-95. Mary Hynes said that after this I-66 could not be widened any further.

- Jennifer DeBruhl said that the financing is coming on the back end of I-95 for transit, as it was not included when the Express Lanes were originally constructed.
- Stephen Johnson asked what percentage of buses would be electric by 2030. Jennifer DeBruhl said that DRPT has funded 17 electric buses in FY2020. Many changes need to be made to increase that number. Stephen Johnson pointed out that the Governor is committed to reducing greenhouse gases.
- Ray Smoot pointed out that the VRE Fredericksburg line is close to 95 in many places, which is not true on 66. He asked if highway enhancements are being made to get people to VRE. Jennifer DeBruhl said those connection points are also being evaluated.
- Mary Hynes said that parking is a challenge. John Malbon asked if land use policies could help address the parking issue. Jennifer DeBruhl said that they utilized what is in the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's regional model in the development of these recommendations. Local land use policies may shift as enhanced rail service becomes a reality.
- Mary Hynes mentioned that Prince William County has six new board members and she suggested outreach to them.
- Mary Hynes asked about the autonomous shuttle in Fairfax. Jennifer DeBruhl said that the regulatory environment for a 12-person shuttle in Fairfax has been difficult thus far. Mary Hynes said it is also an unpleasant walk from the shuttle.
- Stephen Johnson reiterated the need to cross-pollinate what we are doing with I-95. Jennifer DeBruhl said that board would receive an update on the 95 study today.
- Jennifer DeBruhl noted that Ciara Williams was listed on the agenda as a co presenter but could not join today because she had to attend a funeral. She will be leading the American Legion Bridge Study.
- Ray Smoot said that he had not heard anything about extending metro in the presentation today and wanted to know why. Jennifer DeBruhl said the silver line took more than 20 years of planning. Ray Smoot asked why it took so long. Jennifer DeBruhl said it is complicated with the funding, parking, stations and infrastructure needed. Commuter Bus is a better option in the shorter term as it provides more flexibility. Ray Smoot asked if metro was no longer a viable way to transport additional people. Jennifer DeBruhl said that was not what she said. Metro is 40 years old and is focused on state of good repair needs, not expansion.. She said that metro extension needs to be a part of a bigger plan that is not on the table at this time. Mary Hynes said that Metro is currently trying to come up with a plan to deal with the pinch point of the Rosslyn tunnel and that five different options are out for comment. Mary Hynes said that they need to be able to demonstrate that people will ride to push to the next level.

- Ray Smoot summarized by saying that an expansion of metro is not viable at this time. Jennifer DeBruhl said that it is not for near term needs but the I-66 transit plan shows increased metro ridership on the Orange Line.

4. Station Needs Assessment-Emily Stock

Michael McLaughlin introduced Emily Stock and said that DRPT had promised a station assessment in their 2019 look ahead. The following discussion points were noted.

- Mary Hynes asked if there are different needs for Long Haul stations and Commuter Stations. Emily Stock said that they would get into some of the specific needs later in the presentation. She pointed out Nick Ruiz who she said was the lead and can help with questions. She said that FTA guidelines were used to define a State of Good Repair Need.
- John Malbon asked what type of systems were being rated as “poor, marginal, adequate, good or excellent”. Nick Ruiz said that those are station systems like plumbing, HVAC, electric, etc. and are not rail operation systems.
- Mary Hynes asked if the safety and security of stations were generally in the Amtrak bucket. Emily said that they were but that there is not a formula to accomplish this.
- Ray Smoot asked if a significant amount of the ADA work needed is related to elevated platforms. Emily Stock said that it is not all platforms and that some work is making sure that surfaces are smooth, and other basic needs not related to elevated platform are being met.
- Nick Ruiz said that a large percentage of the ADA needs are from the Alexandria station, where the platform is below the top of rail.
- Ray Smoot asked if 13 million would raise all the platforms. Nick Ruiz said that it would include ones that are substandard in their height raised to 8 inches above top of rail, which is the current low level FRA standard.
- Mary Hynes asked if any current projects would lower the overall number. Nick Ruiz said that he had not quantified that because some of the projects were ambiguous. Mary Hynes said it would be important to understand how far down that number comes.
- Ray Smoot asked to go back to the elevated platforms. He said that loading where there are not elevated platforms is not pretty and that rail stations should be invested in, like we have done with airports. It can be demeaning to people.
- Mary Hynes suggested a ramp that could help people board. She said that there has been talk of redoing the Alexandria station for a very long time. Mike McLaughlin said that there is a current project in Alexandria.
- Jeremy Latimer said there would be high level boarding in Newport News as part of the new station policy.

5. Long Bridge and Related Projects-Key to Virginia Rail Growth-Michael McLaughlin

Michael McLaughlin provided an update on Long Bridge and related projects.

- Mary Hynes pointed out that CSX will carry freight from the Port. She said that it may be helpful to assign a percentage to what will come from the Port. That is an important piece of the economy and this is not about just moving people in Northern Virginia.
- Stephen Johnsen thanked the staff that had put together the Long Bridge Tour during the Governor's Innovation Conference. Michael McLaughlin said that if anyone else would like a tour to let DRPT know. Kate Youngbluth from DRPT can coordinate that.
- Mary Hynes said that she wanted to add context to the request from NVTA. There was pushback from NVTA. She said that has a lot to do with the whole funding plan being unclear. Some of that comes from the change to Metro funding. Mary Hynes said that she thinks this project is an appropriate use of NVTA funding. Everyone has their own view. She said the more that DRPT can talk about the impact to the Commonwealth and the impact to the commuter the better. Mary Hynes said that there is Pressure being felt in NOVA. Michael McLaughlin said that DRPT is working with the Secretary's office on the funding plan.

6. Public Comment-There was no public comment.

7. The meeting adjourned at 9:49 am.