

CTB Rail and Transit Subcommittee Meeting Minutes  
VDOT Central Office Training Room  
1221 East Broad Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219  
January 15, 2018

The Meeting began at 8:38 am

CTB Rail Subcommittee Members Present: Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine, DRPT Director Jennifer Mitchell (Joined Late), Ray Smoot (Joined Late), Mary Hynes, Stephen Johnsen and John Malbon.

1. Approval of December 4<sup>th</sup> Minutes-A motion to approve the December 4<sup>th</sup> minutes was made by Stephen Johnsen, seconded by Mary Hynes and approved by Secretary Valentine and John Malbon, the subcommittee members who were present at the time of the vote.
2. Director's Report and Outlook for 2019-DRPT's Chief of Rail Michael McLaughlin and Chief of Transit Jennifer DeBruhl informed the subcommittee that DRPT Director Jennifer Mitchell was not present at the meeting because she was testifying to the House Transportation Committee. They said that Director Mitchell had asked them to jointly give the Director's Update and review the 2019 Look Ahead for Rail and Transit. Michael McLaughlin started by pointing out that Amtrak ridership had increased on all four state sponsored routes in October and November. Secretary Valentine thanked DRPT for working proactively to help increase ridership. Michael McLaughlin said that DRPT will be coming back to the subcommittee in the coming months to discuss WIFI on the trains and new marketing approaches. Jennifer DeBruhl moved into the transit section of the 2019 Look Ahead document and the following discussion points were noted.
  - a. Secretary Valentine asked when the strategic plans for Hampton Roads and Greater Lynchburg Transit Company would be completed. Jennifer DeBruhl said that they would be completed later this year.
  - b. Mary Hynes asked if the Amazon Metro Projects being initiated would be funded by the state. Jennifer DeBruhl said that the proposed Crystal City and Potomac Yard Metro Projects would compete against other capital projects for state funding. Mary Hynes asked if the Metro Board had approved the slate of projects and asked if the Board had resolutions. Secretary Valentine said that Metro had been asking the state for MOA's on these projects. Secretary Valentine asked

Jennifer DeBruhl if metro was leading these projects, with DRPT supplementing and Jennifer DeBruhl confirmed this.

- c. John Malbon asked if the technology exists for the Deployment of an autonomous shuttle for first mile and last mile transit operations. Jennifer DeBruhl said that it did.
- d. Ray Smoot joined the meeting at 8:51 am.
- e. Mary Hynes asked how the Federal Government Shutdown was impacting transit agencies. Jennifer DeBruhl said that it was affecting ridership but that there was concern across the board. She said that DRPT had pulled up the approved February operating funding and distributed it in January to help transit agencies who may have cash flow issues. She said that if the shutdown continues there will be more concerns from transit agencies.
- f. Mary Hynes asked how transit will be expanded to underserved areas. Jennifer DeBruhl said that DRPT has as a demo program designed to target underserved areas and new technology. DRPT is accepting applications for the program and then working with Kathy McGhee at the OIPI office. Jennifer DeBruhl said that there are pockets of the commonwealth that are completely cut off from the rest of the state.

Michael McLaughlin reviewed Rail section of the 2019 Look Ahead document. The following discussion points were noted.

- g. Stephen Johnsen asked if the FRA Record of Decision (ROD) for DC2RVA was the final decision that was needed. Michel McLaughlin said that it was but that it didn't include Long Bridge. Secretary Valentine said that the financial package for Long Bridge needs to be done for the 2020 session.
- h. John Malbon asked if the Development of I-81 Multimodal project recommendations would be opportunities like the Front Royal Inland port. Secretary Shannon Valentine said that the Port needs distribution centers and they do not have to be inland ports.
- i. Michael McLaughlin pointed out that many Amtrak and VRE stations across the Commonwealth are in need of repairs to provide customers with basic amenities. John Malbon asked if these issues were the result of deferred maintenance. Michael McLaughlin said that it was. He also pointed out that the Commonwealth does not own the stations but needs to do what it can to returning the stations to a state of good repair. Michael McLaughlin said it may be possible to amend the Station Policy to have the localities address these issues. Michael McLaughlin said that if the assessment reveals major problems DRPT may come back to the board to look into using the IPROC fund to help with maintenance. Chris Smith said that DRPT should have the station data next month and will bring it back to the Board in May or June. Ray Smoot asked if there will be a requirement moving forward that Amtrak stops have to have a station. Michael McLaughlin said that would be a requirement moving forward. Mary Hynes asked if VRE stations will be looked in this inventory and Michael McLaughlin said that they would be.

- j. Stephen Johnsen asked a question regarding the final bullet point in the rail section which states that Amtrak will release an RFP for new generation of rail cars and dual mode engines. Stephen Johnsen asked if the lifecycle costs of a dual mode engine had been quantified. Michael McLaughlin said he would get Jeremy Latimer to look into that. Secretary Valentine said that Amtrak's CEO understands Virginia's rail cars are tired.
    - k. Ray Smoot asked when the 4<sup>th</sup> track would be completed. Michael McLaughlin said that the design and environmental studies should be completed in the next 2 to 3 years. He said this project is separate from Long Bridge but does tie into it so that there can be 4 tracks over the bridge.
    - l. Ray Smoot asked if the Amazon projects would be creating VRE or Amtrak Stops. Michael McLaughlin said that VRE will probably apply for funding to help with one of them.
    - m. Ray Smoot congratulated the DRPT team on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Norfolk train and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Lynchburg train. Michael McLaughlin said that DRPT had been having conversations with NS and would like to study a possible service extension to Christiansburg.
3. Updates on Intercity Bus Service-Jennifer DeBruhl

Jennifer DeBruhl reviewed the state's Intercity Bus Program which is currently supporting service along the 81 corridor with the Virginia Breeze. The following discussion points were noted.

  - a. John Malbon asked how many buses operated on the Virginia Breeze route and how many years the state's contract with a current operator was for. Jennifer DeBruhl said that there are two branded Virginia Breeze buses and that the contract with the operator is for two years with options. He also asked if the on time performance (OTP) of the bus is good. Jennifer DeBruhl said that it was but that the buses are affected by incidents on Interstate 81.
  - b. Jennifer DeBruhl said that the state is looking into other corridors to expand the intercity bus service. She said that 81 has a great park and ride infrastructure so it made it easy to create stops. Other corridors may be harder.
  - c. Jennifer Mitchell joined the group at the end of the meeting and apologized for being late. She said that she had to present to the House Transportation Committee.
4. Public Comment-No one was signed up for public comment.