



## **Commonwealth Transportation Board Environmental Subcommittee**

VDOT Central Office  
1221 East Broad Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

June 21, 2022  
Minutes

*The meeting was called to order at 10:21 a.m.*

Members of the Subcommittee in attendance: Chris Swanson (representing the Chair), Wayne Coleman, Tom Fowlkes, Mary Hynes, Stephen Johnsen, Scott Kasprowicz, Mark Merrill, Cedric Rucker

### **Welcome**

Chris Swanson, Environmental Division Administrator, VDOT

### **Approval of April 2022 minutes**

Minutes approved

### **Sustainability Office**

#### *Staffing Update*

The staffing process continues for the new Office of Transportation Sustainability (OTS). Recruiting is nearing completion for a Decarbonization Program Manager, and VDOT plans to move forward with hiring the preferred candidate.

Mr. Chris Swanson indicated that the Location and Design (L&D) Division has served as the agency's point-of-contact (POC) for resiliency matters to date. With the creation of the OTS, the decision was made to transition primary responsibilities of POC from L&D to the Environmental Division. To support that effort, a member of L&D (Maria Mutuc) will join the Environmental Division starting June 25th.

Ms. Mary Hynes remarked on how difficult it was to follow all of these changes without visuals and emphasized that what the Board/Subcommittee really need to know is where decision-making authority lies. Mr. Scott Kasprowicz added that the Board needs to understand the bounds of the authority of those individuals/groups. Mr. Swanson offered to pull together that structure and present it to the Subcommittee. He emphasized that, day-to-day, there won't be much change.

### **Decarbonization**

#### *National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Plan Update*

Mr. Chris Berg, Director of the Office of Transportation Sustainability, presented the goals and requirements of the federal NEVI program and VDOT's approach to meeting these requirements (see attached presentation for details).

Mr. Berg mentioned that passenger vehicle emissions comprise the majority of transportation emissions. Electrification is a crucial tool of transportation decarbonization, combined with reducing vehicle miles traveled.

Ms. Hynes and Mr. Kasprovicz asked whether DEQ gave the Transportation Secretariat a target for 2030/2045. Chris Berg replied that, at this time, VDOT has not been given a target. However, we are in continued conversations with DEQ and other Partners.

Part of the first phase is identifying “alternative fuel corridors (AFCs).” These are state-designated, federally approved routes that form a network through which EVs can move freely. The federal requirements mandate that charging stations be installed, at most, 1 mile from the interstate, every 50 miles along AFCs. The goal of the first phase of the program is to meet the federal 50-mile requirement to build out these corridors.

Steve Johnsen noted that the requirement to install chargers within “1 mile from the interstate” is limiting for rural areas. Cedric Rucker also commented on how the map revealed the prevalence of the chargers in urban areas but noted a lack in rural areas. Chris Berg assured him that a gap analysis is part of the planning process, and that the second phase of the project is focused on community and rural charging. Our goal is to meet the federal requirements along the interstate first in order to take advantage of the federal funding.

Mary Hynes asked how long it will take to meet the requirements under the first phase. Chris Berg responded that it is at least a 2-year timeline. Much will depend on the private sector, as VDOT is not planning to own or maintain these charging stations. VDOT is required to update the plan every year.

Steve Johnsen asked whether, in addition to considering demand, VDOT is also looking at the supply of additional electricity/capacity. Chris Berg responded that the agency is considering supply and coordinating with the Virginia Department of Energy and utility companies.

Scott Kasprovicz asked whether there is any guidance in the way the program is currently developed on electricity sourcing that fuels charging centers (e.g., renewable, etc.). Chris Berg said that there are no requirements on this, but funding can be used for on-site distributed energy resources (such as solar) to help offset the cost of the charging infrastructure.

Mary Hynes commented on the growing importance of EV infrastructure (whether in parking garages or along the interstates) and considered how to tie it to the \$800 million available in SMART SCALE funding next year. She asked whether there is a lens the Board could apply to SMART SCALE applications to understand who is bringing forward projects that would support growth of this infrastructure. She suggested creating a check-box for applications that include certain elements (e.g., charging stations). Steve Johnsen asked what VDOT’s approach is to electrification of its fleet of vehicles that can be reasonably electrified.

Scott Kasprovicz asked whether we are supplementing, competing, or collaborating with private industry. Chris Berg said that we will be spurring private sector development by providing up to 80% of charging station installation costs through federal funds with the private sector providing a minimum of 20%

Mary Hynes commented that there may be localities that want to pursue that funding to create a

revenue stream from the charging infrastructure. Chris Berg replied that, as long as they can provide the 20% match, localities, universities, or others could apply as well.

Scott Kasprovicz asked if, in addition to this formula funding, there are also discretionary funds associated with the program. Chris Berg said that there are. A competitive discretionary grant provides \$2.5 billion over 5 years nationwide. Guidance has not yet been released.

Mary Hynes asked for a mechanism for the Board to affirmatively acknowledge, support and commit to the goals and structure of the NEVI plan.

#### *Baseline reviews and strategy work plans – Upcoming*

Given ongoing efforts to recruit for the office and get resources and manpower established, the OTS has not initiated the development of the work plans.

### **Land Management**

#### *Management Considerations Update*

VDOT has begun an evaluation of land management policies and uses of VDOT right of way. This will require sustaining environmental stewardship practices while maximizing existing assets, which necessitates a balance of various needs/goals of different programs and informing decisions when there are competing interests.

Scott Kasprovicz opined that the starting point should be a comprehensive inventory of our current land management uses/practices. Chris Swanson acknowledged that there is an active effort underway by our geospatial design team in the Location and Design Division to develop one. We are first confirming that our ownership and maintenance inventory is accurate. Then, we will digitize the boundaries of our ownership so we can look at land use within them.

Scott requested an outline of how that process is being developed and potential criteria for those parcels. Chris Swanson promised to present on the concept and methodology by the end of the year.

Scott Kasprovicz shared his vision that all of the elements discussed would develop into a rich model for one overarching program. As VDOT embarks on an inventory of the more than ½ million acres that it owns, some part of managing land use should be at the Board level. The Board could apply a hierarchy of priorities for maximum utility (e.g., environmental considerations, return on investment, and minimization of maintenance inputs).

Mary Hynes said that, in the long run, we're going to want SMART SCALE applications to identify these types of strategies, so we'll need to build out our inventory and our plan robustly for stronger SMART SCALE measures.

### **Public comment**

There was no public comment.

*The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 a.m.*