



MINUTES
NVTC COMMISSION MEETING – NOVEMBER 6, 2014
NVTC CONFERENCE ROOM – ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chairman Smedberg at 8:22 P.M.

Members Present

Sharon Bulova
John Cook
James Dyke
William Euille
Jay Fisette
Catherine Hudgins
Mary Hynes
James LeMunyon
Jeff McKay
J. Randall Minchew
Jennifer Mitchell (DRPT alternate)
Ken Reid
Thomas Rust
Paul Smedberg
David F. Snyder
J. Walter Tejada
Jennifer Wexton

Members Absent

Richard Black
John Foust
Jeff Greenfield

Staff Present

Kelley Coyner
Rhonda Gilchrest
Claire Gron
Scott Kalkwarf
David Koch
Jillian Linnell
Kala Quintana
Marti Reinfeld
Melissa Walker
Aimee Perron Siebert (Hillbridge Group)
Doug Allen (VRE)
Bryan Jungwirth (VRE)
Steve MacIsaac (VRE)
Joe Swartz (VRE)

Ms. Coyner introduced Kate Mattice who will be joining NVTC staff on November 17th as the Director of Transit Programs and Policy. Ms. Mattice served as the Deputy Associate Administrator of Budget and Policy/Deputy Chief Financial Officer at the Federal Transit Administration. On behalf of the entire Commission, Chairman Smedberg welcomed her to NVTC.

Approval of the Minutes

Mrs. Hudgins moved, with a second by Mr. Reid, to approve the minutes of the October 2, 2014 NVTC Meeting. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Bulova, Cook, Dyke, Fisette, Hudgins, Hynes, LeMunyon, McKay, Reid, Rust, Smedberg, Snyder and Wexton. Mr. Tejada and Delegate Minchew abstained.

Consent Agenda

On a motion by Mrs. Hynes and a second by Mr. McKay, the Commission unanimously approved the Consent Agenda, which includes the following items:

- Authorize Issuance of Request for Proposals for Auditing Services
- Resolution #2257: Authorize Pension Trustees to Amend Trust

The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Bulova, Cook, Dyke, Fisette, Hudgins, Hynes, LeMunyon, McKay, Minchew, Reid, Rust, Smedberg, Snyder, Tejada and Wexton.

NVTC's Remote Participation Policy and Guidelines

Ms. Coyner explained that the proposed policy will allow remote participation in NVTC committee meetings for qualified reasons up to two times a year. NVTC staff is assessing the communication technology needed to provide electronic participation in the first floor meeting space. She suggested the Commission reassess the policy in six months to take advantage of any template that is expected to be released by the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council.

Delegate Minchew asked if there is a need to act now or if it could wait until the template is released. Ms. Coyner stated that there is an interest in at least providing limited participation for committee meetings. NVTC cannot utilize remote participation without an adopted policy. The Commission can come back in the future and amend its policy.

Mr. Reid stated that this a good policy and it reflects many of the comments made at last month's meeting. He is pleased to see that the policy allows for video conferencing. He is in support of adopting this policy now and taking into consideration the template when it is available for any future changes.

Mr. Reid moved, with a second by Mr. Snyder, to approve NVTC's Policy and Guidelines for Remote Participation in NVTC committee meetings and to direct staff to propose upgrades and assess technology needed to extend the remote participation to Commission meetings. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Bulova, Cook, Dyke, Fisette, Hudgins, Hynes, McKay, Minchew, Reid, Rust, Smedberg, Snyder, Tejada and Wexton. Delegate LeMunyon abstained since he is a member of the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council.

Legislative and Policy Committee Report

Mr. McKay announced that NVTC has invited the Northern Virginia Delegations of the General Assembly and the U.S. Congress to the December 4th meeting at 7:00 P.M. to discuss NVTC legislative priorities. NVTC's regular business meeting will follow at 8:00 P.M. Mr. McKay stated that NVTC's legislative priorities on the state level are implementation of HB2313 and HB2 including the loss of transit funding related to the Marketplace Fairness Act, the Capital Funding Cliff, and specific VRE and WMATA funding issues (PRIIA and Momentum). Federal legislative issues include equity of the transit benefit, reauthorization of surface transportation programs, and PRIIA.

Mr. McKay noted that NVTC significantly updated its Legislative and Policy Agenda last year, which included a set of five priorities. The priorities remain constant, and are, as follows:

- Secure funding
- Sound performance and project selection metrics
- Strong local decision making authority
- Technological innovation
- Maximizing the use of existing infrastructure

Mr. McKay stated that the Commission will be asked to adopt the updated Legislative and Policy Agenda at the December 4th meeting.

Mrs. Hynes stated that the WMATA Board had a discussion today about the transit benefit legislation. She observed that this is the time to pressure Congress to pass legislation that provides parity between parking and transit benefits. Mr. McKay stated that NVTC has sent letters in the past supporting transit benefit parity.

Update on Planning Session

Ms. Coyner stated that the Commission held a Planning Session on October 27th to discuss a proposed strategic framework. The framework includes a vision, mission, goals and objectives aligned with the priorities set by NVTC at the December 2013 Planning Session and continued with the extensive work the Commission has done over the last year. The revised framework reflects comments made at the Planning Session.

Ms. Coyner explained that the Planning Session focused on sharpening the mission of NVTC and what it does as an organization in relation to planning, coordinating and securing funding for transit. The current mission statement was established over 30 years ago and focuses more on the convening aspect of the Commission. At the Planning Session, Commissioners discussed sharpening the mission statement and agreed that it needs to be measurable and concrete. Ms. Coyner stated that staff is mindful of that but believes that this needs to be part of the next level of discussion on the impacts of the Implementation Plan and the value of the kinds of activities to be achieved over time. Commissioners also talked about the role of NVTC in the areas of oversight, accountability, and performance management.

Mr. Euille arrived at 8:34 P.M. and joined the discussion.

Ms. Coyner stated that as a result of the Planning Session discussion, a third goal has been added for consideration. For VRE, NVTC is a co-owner with PRTC and has certain oversight responsibilities because of that ownership. For WMATA, NVTC does this through its WMATA Board members. The proposed goals and objectives are:

- 1. Increase the capacity of the regional transit network by expanding and improving the quality, coverage, and frequency of new and existing systems, including Metro, VRE and new transit services. We will achieve this through:**
 - 1.1 Access to sustainable, reliable, dedicated funding sources for WMATA, including Metro 2025;
 - 1.2 A regional strategy to fund the VRE System Plan;
 - 1.3 Continued and increased funding for regional transit infrastructure;
 - 1.4 Efficient use of existing rail and roadway infrastructure.
- 2. Improve the access and mobility throughout Northern Virginia by connecting the regional and local transit systems. We will achieve this through:**
 - 2.1 Regional technology improvements that provide customers with better access to information and convenient travel within and among transit systems;
 - 2.2 Regional and state plans that align local and regional transit services and advance dedicated transit corridors.

3. Promote safe, reliable, and financially sound performance and management of regional transit systems. We will achieve this through:

- 3.1 Governance and oversight of VRE commuter rail performance and management as co-owners with the Potomac Rappahannock Transportation Commission;
- 3.2 Appointment and support of Virginia members to WMATA Board of Directors to hold the agency accountable for peak performance and sound management;

Ms. Coyner stated that next steps include finalizing the strategic framework and bringing it back to the Commission for approval at the December 4th meeting. NVTC staff is working with the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) to help sort the objectives and prioritize some of the activities. The Implementation Plan and FY 2016 Budget will be presented for approval at the January meeting.

Delegate LeMunyon stated that goals without metrics are not goals so he would not view these goals and objectives as being complete. He also asked if outsiders would understand the use of “premier” in the mission statement and suggested “primary” may be a better word. Mr. McKay stated that it is important to lay out exactly who NVTC is and that we are “the” transit organization in Northern Virginia. There are other transit organizations but they focus on operations. NVTC is focused on connecting all the transit systems together to be efficient, operate at a high level, and coordinate planning as a region. Mrs. Bulova stated that she was not able to attend the Planning Session but she likes the use of “premier” since no other organization does this function and it implies that NVTC needs to do it well.

Mr. Reid stated that he is glad to see the third goal added but expressed his concern that “oversight” is used only referring to VRE but not for WMATA. Mrs. Hynes stated that NVTC owns VRE but does not own WMATA. NVTC partners with WMATA and the jurisdictions pay for it. WMATA Board members are happy to provide any information that NVTC Commissioners request. If there are questions or concerns, they will bring them to the WMATA Board. She expressed her concern that we function collectively and not individually. NVTC appoints its members to the WMATA Board and entrusts them with that oversight.

Mr. Reid stated that Loudoun County has been paying gas tax since 1989 and is part of the Capital Funding Agreement process and he has a right to look at the WMATA budget at NVTC meetings. NVTC oversees the distribution of gas tax revenue to WMATA and thus has part ownership of WMATA. Mrs. Hudgins replied that NVTC’s WMATA Board Members have provided information to NVTC on the budget. She would be happy to add a WMATA budget presentation to NVTC’s agenda. She doesn’t see Commissioners playing the same role on reviewing the budget because they will not be voting on it. There is always access to WMATA Board Members and to the General Manager to ask questions and request any information. Mrs. Bulova noted that there has been an annual budget presentation to NVTC by the WMATA General Manager. She stated that NVTC does have a role in approving VRE’s budget because NVTC is a

co-owner. By statute, NVTC does not have the same role in approving the WMATA budget.

Delegate Minchew stated that the noun “oversight” would be appropriate in Goal #3 and he does not see it as adversarial. He also noted that the mission statement is missing the concept of “cost effective” or “cost efficient” transit.

Mr. Cook stated that it is a good idea to define NVTC’s role with WMATA. He agrees with Mrs. Bulova and stated that oversight is too strong a word and WMATA is too complicated for NVTC to have true oversight. He asked staff to come back with some wording suggestions. Ms. Coyner explained that the use of “hold accountable” was meant to convey this kind of oversight. The Commission has agreed to a meeting calendar that explicitly includes the WMATA budget cycle. She stated that staff could wordsmith some of the goal language.

Chairman Smedberg stated that he doesn’t think Commissioners understand the time, effort and commitment that goes into being a WMATA Board Member. It is also important to understand how they relate to the jurisdictions and the Commonwealth. Ms. Mitchell stated that it is also important to understand their role as they interact with representatives of Maryland, the District of Columbia and the Federal government.

Mr. Reid thanked Mr. Whitfield for giving him a copy of the materials from today’s WMATA Financial and Administrative Committee meeting. He has never seen this material as part of NVTC’s meeting materials and would like to see this included in the future. Mrs. Hynes observed that all these documents are on the WMATA website and are available to the public. Mr. Reid stated that it is very clear that NVTC’s WMATA Board Members do not want another set of eyes on the WMATA budget. Chairman Smedberg observed that Mr. Reid’s comments suggest that NVTC is holding back information and that is not the case since these materials are readily available. Mrs. Hudgins noted that the financial information is provided in the NVTC meeting materials. If Commissioners want this information to be presented in different way that is more helpful, that can be accomplished. The materials can provide the link to the Finance and Administrative Committee materials.

Mr. Snyder observed that there seems to be an interest for more active engagement between the Commission and its WMATA Board members. Despite how it is worded, the goal can convey that NVTC is interested in more involvement in WMATA issues than in the past. He personally does not think NVTC wants to be directly involved in managing WMATA because that means that in the event of an accident or a lawsuit, NVTC will be part of that. He stated that there is some value in adding the wording “active engagement with WMATA Board members” in Objective 3.2.

Mr. Fisette stated that NVTC is not the WMATA Board of Directors and WMATA has its own Board of Directors. NVTC jurisdictions give funding to many other organizations and he does not want to sit on every board the County provides funding. If he ever needs any information he just needs to ask for it. NVTC meetings are an open forum and any question about WMATA can be asked and information sought. NVTC had four members that spend a significant amount of time on WMATA issues. Any

Commissioner can read the information on WMATA's website, sit in on meetings, and request information. He sees NVTC's role with VRE as completely different and that is why in his opinion "oversight" should be used with VRE. NVTC can't redefine its role with WMATA. Chairman Smedberg stated that in fairness to the WMATA Board members, when there have been issues, they have brought it to NVTC's attention.

Mrs. Bulova likes Mr. Snyder's suggestion of "appointment, support of, and active engagement." Mrs. Hynes agreed and asked staff to focus on finding out what specific information individual Commissioners may want included as regular information in that isn't already being provided. Every report can be provided, but it takes her several hours to read them. Mr. Reid stated that he wants an annual presentation on the WMATA budget and some of these financial documents provided each month.

Mr. Tejada suggested adding the concept of a "diverse region" to the vision statement to reflect the diversity of this region. Ms. Coyner suggested using "all residents" since the key is that all residents have access to transit. Goal 2 could also reflect improving access and mobility for all residents. Mr. McKay suggested this wording: "Northern Virginia businesses and residents are served by a high capacity, high quality network of transit systems that allow our diverse region to thrive economically." He explained that this reflects that this region is diverse in many ways, including culturally, geographically, economically and with land use abilities. Mr. Tejada concurred. Delegate Rust observed that we serve more than just businesses, we serve many visitors. Mrs. Hynes suggested "Northern Virginia is served by a high capacity, high quality network of transit systems that allow our diverse region to thrive economically." Commissioners concurred.

Executive Director's Report

Ms. Coyner reported that the Governor's Transportation Conference is scheduled for November 12-14, 2014. DRPT Director Mitchell is leading a session on how transit and rail are critical to Virginia's economy. The Commonwealth Transportation Board is also scheduled to meet on November 12. NVTC staff has been working with CTB members, the office of the Secretary of Transportation, NVTB and the transit systems and the localities to ensure that the metrics offered present a level playing field for transit projects. Ms. Coyner also announced that there will be an update on NEPP at the December meeting.

NVTC's FY 2015 1st Quarter Ridership Report

Ms. Gron reported that about half of the transit systems are showing increases in ridership in the first quarter. Ridership for the first quarter totals 41,849,438 daily passenger trips, which is a 1.1 percent increase over FY 2014. Mr. Cook stated that it would be helpful to also break down the data and provide average daily ridership numbers on the chart.

Mr. Reid stated that there has been a significant drop in ridership on the Orange Line especially at the West Falls Church Station while there is a big increase in ridership on the Silver Line. He assumes that parking is now readily available at the West Falls Church station and asked how this is impacting parking revenue, which will impact WMATA's budget. Mrs. Hudgins stated that you can see the shift in ridership to the Silver Line when it opened. Delegate LeMunyon stated that parking garage usage at West Falls Church has dropped by 32 percent since the Silver Line opened. There are revenue implications but there is also an opportunity to get more cars off I-66. He has had conversations with Deputy Secretary of Transportation Nick Donohue to explore opening the HOV lanes between the Beltway and Route 7 during rush hour to encourage drivers to park at the West Falls Church station and take Metro to their destination. This could ease congestion on some of the other roads like Route 50 where drivers have to get off I-66 at the Beltway and take another road into the District. He stated that keeping the HOV restrictions in place is costing WMATA potential revenue.

Mr. McKay stated that it is important to remember that parking fees are a part of a person's total fare. In the past when parking fees increase, usage dropped. He asked WMATA Board members to be mindful that parking costs are part of a person's total fare. He also stated that receiving periodic information on parking usage would be helpful.

Mr. Reid asked if NVTC should authorize the Chair to draft a letter endorsing the concept of lifting HOV between the Beltway and Route 7. Ms. Mitchell stated that it is a decision for the Commonwealth Transportation Board. Chairman Smedberg stated that a letter may be premature.

Delegate Rust observed that there was a significant increase in ridership for the Loudoun County Transit system. Mr. Paul Mounier of Loudoun County staff stated that the increase is because local service was not included in last year's counts.

Commonwealth and Regional Agency Reports

Virginia Railway Express (VRE). Mr. Allen reported that VRE on-time performance (OTP) for the month of September was 92 percent and ridership continues to remain steady. He explained that VRE tries to provide opportunities to expose non-riders to VRE service. Two of these kinds of events include Clifton Days where VRE ran excursion trains and the upcoming VRE Annual Santa Trains which are scheduled for December 13th in conjunction with the Marine Corp Toys for Tots campaign. Commissioners interested in tickets should contact VRE staff. He also reported that all but one jurisdiction has approved the weighted vote amendment to the Master Agreement. The City of Fredericksburg is expected to take action in December or January. VRE is also planning to issue a RFP to update the Gainesville-Haymarket Extension Study to advance that effort. The VRE FY 2016 Budget will be presented at NVTC's January meeting for approval.

WMATA. Delegate LeMunyon asked for a report at the December meeting on how WMATA is addressing the ridership decline. Ms. Coyner agreed to work with WMATA staff on this and noted that this month's meeting materials include analysis on why ridership is down. Staff can recirculate it to Commissioners. She explained that a big factor is the reduced transit benefit. Delegate LeMunyon also asked about the status of the audited financials. Mrs. Hudgins stated that these documents are expected after the first of the year.

Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT). Ms. Mitchell reported that the Commonwealth Transportation Board will be presented with a revised Six-Year Plan for approval at its next meeting. There are reductions in both operating and capital for transit, which will require a requested for the CTB to approve a transfer of capital funding to operating so DRPT does not have to return to the jurisdictions and ask for funds back. She encouraged the jurisdictions to budget conservatively for next year. For FY 2016 it is estimated that there will be a 10 percent decrease in state funding. Mr. Reid asked about the Columbia Pike Street Car project. Mrs. Hynes stated that the \$35 million for this project is state funding that comes through NVTC to support the project. Mr. Reid asked if WMTA will operate the system. Mr. Fisette stated that the program management team is looking at that issue, but it is highly unlikely it would be WMATA. In response to a question from Delegate LeMunyon, Ms. Mitchell stated that the Columbia Streetcar project would not be subject to HB2 since the funding is allocated in FY 2015 and 2016.

Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA). Mrs. Bulova reported that there was a stakeholder meeting on November 9, 2014. Mr. Euille stated that NVTA's November 13th meeting has been cancelled.

Mr. Snyder asked staff to provide a brief written report on the VTA Board Meeting that was recently held in Richmond.

NVTC Financial Report

The financial report for September 2014 was provided and there were no questions from Commissioners.

Adjournment

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Cook, to adjourn the meeting. The vote in favor was unanimous. Chairman Smedberg adjourned the meeting at 9:36 P.M.

Approved this fourth day of December, 2014.

Paul C. Smedberg
Chairman

Jay Fisette
Secretary-Treasurer