

**NVTC PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING SUMMARY  
NVTC Conference Room, Suite #230  
Navy League Building – Arlington, Virginia  
Public Streaming via YouTube  
September 13, 2021**

**NVTC Program Advisory Committee Members Present:**

David Snyder, Chair  
Elizabeth Bennett-Parker  
John Foust  
Libby Garvey  
David Meyer  
Michael R. Turner

**Staff and Others Present:**

Kate Mattice, NVTC Executive Director  
Matt Friedman  
Allan Fye  
Dan Goldfarb  
Ben Owen

Chairman Snyder called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. He explained that NVTC is back to regular committee meetings with a few modifications due to the rise of the Delta variant. Chairman Snyder reviewed the procedures and instructions for electronic meetings based on the updated NVTC Electronic Participation Policy. He noted that there are presentation slides shown on YouTube Live for the public and staff.

Chairman Snyder asked if any changes are needed to the summary of the April 22, 2021 joint meeting between the I-395/95 Joint Commission Working Group and Program Advisory Committee. He explained that the summary would also be shared with the Joint Commission Working Group at their next meeting. Committee members accepted the summary of the April 22, 2021 meeting with no changes. Chairman Snyder then outlined the meeting agenda's two topics: a discussion of staff's recommendation for a Commuter Choice on the I-66 Corridor Supplemental Round Four (FY 2022) Program of Projects as well as an Envision Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit project update.

**Commuter Choice Program on the I-66 Corridor: Staff Recommendation for Supplemental Round Four (FY 2022) Program of Projects**

Chairman Snyder reminded committee members that the Commission's approval of a limited Initial Round Four (FY 2021) Program of Projects in December 2020 included an intention to

support further proposals submitted to the Round Four call for projects as funding allowed. He asked Ms. Mattice whether formal action was required of the PAC at today's meeting. Ms. Mattice said that no formal action is required, but the PAC is welcome to take action if it so chooses.

Chairman Snyder then asked Mr. Owen to detail staff's proposed supplemental Program of Projects. Mr. Owen reviewed prior steps in the I-66 Corridor Round Four program development process and indicated that NVTC now has up to \$7 million to award to new projects, of which four proposals to the Round Four call for projects remained under consideration for funding. He stated that the staff-recommended program includes the three projects that can be accommodated within the available funding, taking technical scores into account, along with NVTC's administration and oversight activities for the overall I-66 Corridor program for FY 2022, for a total of \$5.75 million. The three recommended projects – two transportation demand management strategies and a new bus service – would move about 500 more people through the I-66 Corridor each day in total upon full implementation and as travel patterns revert to more typical conditions. Mr. Owen highlighted the public comment period that was underway and subsequent steps up to anticipated program approvals next month. All input received will be shared with the Program Advisory Committee and Commission prior to approval of any supplemental Program of Projects.

Chairman Snyder then turned to questions from committee members. He first asked for clarification on the amount of funding available at this point in the Round Four process. Mr. Owen explained that \$3.8 million had already been programmed in the initial Round Four project selection process and that \$7 million is available for programming at this stage. If the proposed \$5.75 million supplemental Program of Projects is approved, the remaining \$1.25 million would be available for the I-66 Round Five (FY 2023-FY 2024) program, for which the call for projects is expected to open this fall. Ms. Mattice and Mr. Owen further explained that approximately \$5 million would be made available for Commuter Choice projects on the I-66 Corridor each year from concessionaire payments as required in the updated I-66 Corridor Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Commonwealth, in addition to Inside the Beltway revenues.

Ms. Garvey and Ms. Mattice discussed the structure of the I-66 Corridor MOA in terms of the permitted use of toll revenues to support proposed Long Bridge and Rosslyn Metrorail major capital improvements. Ms. Mattice explained that the MOA stipulates that the Commonwealth must be able to meet its scheduled payments to NVTC for Commuter Choice before issuing toll revenue-backed bonds to fund the two capital projects. She added that toll revenue is not at a point where financing those projects is feasible. She further noted that normally, I-66 Round Four programming would have wrapped up well before this point. The Commission took a conservative approach with Round Four in splitting it up into two components given the decreases in and uncertainty of FY 2021-2022 revenues.

Mr. Meyer asked about the Town of Vienna's New Park and Ride at Patrick Henry Library proposal and its status. Mr. Owen explained that while the project remains under consideration for funding, it is not included in the staff recommended funding scenario based on its technical score and the overall project cost. If it does not receive funding in this round, the Town may reapply in a future round for Commuter Choice funding.

Mr. Turner asked whether and what kind of buses would be purchased for the New Bus Service from Reston South to Crystal City project. Mr. Owen responded that they would likely be 40-foot diesel buses to which Mr. Turner noted that may not be the direction the Commission is looking to go regarding the type of bus. Mr. Foust concurred and noted the overall costs of diesel versus electric buses. Ms. Mattice reminded the committee that project submissions are decisions made by local boards and councils. She indicated that NVTC staff could develop program guidance addressing vehicle technologies but also that members should encourage their jurisdictions' staff to consider ideas such as electric buses in the course of local decisions about application submissions to the Commuter Choice program.

Mr. Turner suggested establishing policy to preclude funding further diesel buses under the program or that, if a project with diesel buses is submitted for consideration, the application would obtain significantly fewer points in the scoring process. Chairman Snyder asked whether any member disagreed with Mr. Turner's suggestion; there was no disagreement. Chairman Snyder then summarized the two elements of the committee's request to staff: to develop policy guidance to encourage alternative propulsion technologies under the program and to make strong requests of applicants to procure non-diesel buses for their transit service projects. Ms. Mattice responded that staff would develop an approach to addressing the committee's direction in guidance prior to the next call for projects. Chairman Snyder also requested that staff ask Fairfax County staff if the bus propulsion type for the New Bus Service from Reston South to Crystal City project could be changed, and to report back on the county's response prior to Commission approval of any supplemental Program of Projects. Ms. Mattice confirmed that staff would do so, though Fairfax County would be constrained to the service scope and overall budget included in the application, and would share the county's response with the committee and include it in the October Commission meeting materials.

Mr. Foust then asked for clarification on the scope of the Town of Vienna's New Park and Ride at Patrick Henry Library project. Mr. Owen explained that the funding request is for a part of the cost of constructing a new parking garage at the redeveloped library in downtown Vienna and that a certain number of the spaces would be set aside for commuters.

Ms. Bennett-Parker asked whether some of the potential leftover funding slated for inclusion in Round Five could be used for increases in cost if the Reston South to Crystal City bus service project were to include electric buses. Ms. Mattice noted that projects have been evaluated in accordance with the scope and budget submitted with each application.

Ms. Garvey asked what would be done with the buses in the middle of the day between the peak period trips on the proposed New Bus Service from Reston South to Crystal City project. Mr. Owen answered that Fairfax County could use the additional fleet for other purposes at other times of the day.

Chairman Snyder asked Mr. Owen to outline staff's proposed Commuter Choice program updates. Mr. Owen noted staff is proposing only one program policy refinement this year which would change the requirements for standalone transportation demand management (TDM) projects to reinforce the TDM definition that the Commission (as well as PRTC) adopted last fall.

The refinement would apply to future calls for projects and require direct incentives to comprise at least two-thirds of the cost of any standalone TDM project. He noted this policy refinement would provide for a more measurable project and have a clearer benefit for toll payers.

Mr. Owen also highlighted the fact that each corridor has a cap on the amount of transit operations funding relative to the total amount of funding awarded. He explained that 50% of funds that NVTC receives from the Commonwealth can be used for transit operations over any consecutive nine-year period in the I-66 Corridor and over any consecutive five-year period in the I-395/95 Corridor. He noted that the program is getting close to the cap for the I-395/95 Corridor and that staff is monitoring the situation.

Lastly, Mr. Owen said staff has been exploring ways to support jurisdictions and transit agencies that may want to pursue microtransit, either for Commuter Choice projects or more generally, by reducing procurement barriers and providing guidance on good practices. Staff has surveyed eligible applicants as to their interest in NVTC potentially coordinating some type of regional procurement and talked with several other transit agencies around the country as to their experiences deploying microtransit and how they did it. He noted that he would continue to work with WMATA, which is conducting its own on-demand transit study, and eligible Commuter Choice recipients on how NVTC can be a resource moving forward. Ms. Mattice and Mr. Owen noted, in response to a question from Mr. Foust, that competitive procurement requirements under Commuter Choice can create a greater challenge for smaller jurisdictions to pursue microtransit as a means of helping meet local transportation needs.

#### Envision Route 7 BRT Update

Chairman Snyder then asked for an update on the Envision Route 7 bus rapid transit (BRT) project, including a brief reminder of what has been accomplished so far, immediate next steps, and an overview of the work yet to come. Regarding the immediate next steps, Chairman Snyder noted that staff will be requesting the Commission's authorization to award a contract for the Phase IV-1 analysis at the October Commission meeting.

Mr. Goldfarb reminded the committee of the alignment of the Envision Route 7 BRT project in that it would connect Tysons Corner to Mark Center and that it will be critical to serve East Falls Church. He said that the project fits within a broader, regional BRT framework that is in the works with other planning partners across Northern Virginia. He then highlighted the Phase III conceptual engineering study which was recently completed. Next, Mr. Goldfarb said that the Phase IV mobility study would address the mobility benefits of BRT, improve understanding of traffic interactions with the proposed BRT and facilitate public understanding of how BRT would operate, among other topics. The study will include ridership estimates, traffic analysis and robust public outreach to advance the project. Mr. Goldfarb then summarized the project timeline and next steps in the process.

Mr. Foust asked when the mobility study would be completed. Mr. Goldfarb responded that the first phase – which is the more complex phase – would be completed in approximately 18 months from contract start, which is anticipated for October. He said that the second phase would then take approximately eight to 12 months. Mr. Foust asked if anything could be done to expedite

the project's timeline, noting that studies of the project commenced in 2014. Mr. Goldfarb responded that he is hoping that the Phase IV study would advance the project significantly and that many jurisdiction partners are looking to implement elements of the project as quickly as possible. Ms. Mattice added that the project would likely be competitive for federal RAISE grant funding but that further planning is required. Mr. Goldfarb also noted that there is a certain level of planning required to get the benefits desired, referencing the somewhat limited impact of BRT in Montgomery County, Maryland.

Ms. Garvey asked if the entire route would be dedicated right-of-way. Mr. Goldfarb noted that the project will have dedicated right-of-way where possible, but it will not be for the entire route. He said that the project team would look to technology improvements where dedicated right-of-way is not possible.

#### Other Business / Future Meetings

Chairman Snyder asked if there is there any other business for the committee. He noted that staff will follow up with committee members closer to the date regarding the timing of the next meeting.

Chairman Snyder adjourned the meeting at 5:09 p.m.