

**NVTC-PRTC JOINT COMMISSION WORKING GROUP
PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY
Via Electronic Participation
Public Streaming via YouTube
September 15, 2022**

NVTC-PRTC Joint Commission Working Group Members Present:

Jeff McKay, Chair (NVTC)
Tinesha Allen (PRTC)
Sarah Bagley (NVTC)
Kenny Boddye (PRTC)
Libby Garvey (NVTC)
Jeanette Rishell (PRTC)

Other Commissioners Present:

David Meyer (NVTC)

Staff and Others Present:

Kate Mattice, NVTC Executive Director
Monique Blyther
Matt Friedman
Allan Fye
Adam Hager
Ben Owen
Joe Stainsby
Melissa Walker

Joint Commission Working Group Chair McKay called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. He noted that staff followed procedures and guidelines to give notice to Working Group members, both Commissions, staff and the public about today's meeting. He explained that the meeting is an all-virtual public meeting as permitted under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and NVTC's Electronic Participation Policy and is being streamed live via NVTC's YouTube channel.

Mr. Fye called the roll and determined a quorum was present. He then introduced staff.

Chair McKay noted that members were provided with a summary of the previous Working Group meeting held on April 22, 2021. He asked if anyone had comments to share with staff; there were none.

Mr. Meyer joined the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

Chair McKay then thanked members for volunteering to serve on the Working Group. He explained the purpose of the Working Group, noting it serves as an intermediary between the two Commissions and corridor jurisdictions during the I-395/95 Commuter Choice funding cycle. He then asked Ms. Mattice and Mr. Stainsby for upfront remarks.

Ms. Mattice thanked members for their participation and said the Working Group will help shape exciting and transformative transit investments in this next I-395/95 Commuter Choice round. She stated that staff has already started conversations with eligible applicants about project ideas and she encouraged Working Group members to think strategically about efforts that would fit well with the program's goals.

Mr. Stainsby also thanked members for their participation and observed that OmniRide is excited to participate and play a role in helping shape the regional commuting landscape.

Chair McKay asked if there were any initial questions from members. There were none. He then asked Mr. Owen to go through his presentation.

Mr. Boddye joined the meeting at 4:21 p.m.

I-395/95 Commuter Choice Program

Mr. Owen provided a brief overview of the Commuter Choice program, noting that it reinvests a portion of toll revenues from I-66 and I-395/95 into transit and other transportation improvements that benefit the respective corridor's toll payers by moving more people and expanding travel options. He explained that NVTC and PRTC have co-approval roles for I-395/95 Commuter Choice and take actions in tandem, but NVTC staff handles day-to-day administration of the program.

Mr. Owen said staff expects \$45-48 million available for new projects in this upcoming funding cycle covering fiscal years 2024-2025. He encouraged members to consider how this funding might leverage other major investments in the corridor, including the 95 Express Lanes extension to Fredericksburg and Commonwealth-led rail upgrades, and support regional efforts to make transit more attractive to rebuild ridership. Mr. Owen also noted that the program is limited in the overall share of funding that may be allocated to transit operations, which is part of the reason that staff is encouraging capital project proposals in this round. He then provided a summary of the timeline for the call for projects process, explaining that application materials would be made available to eligible applicants in mid-November and applications would be due January 27, 2023. Mr. Owen also detailed the major steps in the program development process starting in early 2023 starting with an eligibility review for submitted applications and ending with adoption of a Program of Projects by the Commissions and the Commonwealth Transportation Board in June.

Next, Mr. Owen described the program's current technical evaluation process. He explained the four criteria – technical merit, annualized cost effectiveness, applicant preference and

interagency collaboration – of which technical merit, which comprises factors that assess projects' support for the program's goals, accounts for most (70 of 100) possible points.

Mr. Owen then outlined staff's proposed changes to the process. The changes would emphasize the measurable aspects of the process by allocating more points to technical merit and annualized cost effectiveness while reducing the points for applicant preference and removing interagency collaboration entirely. The changes would also incorporate equity considerations by adding the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs) into the technical merit accessibility factor, allowing applications to receive points for serving or linking regional activity centers and/or EEAs interchangeably. Mr. Owen noted that staff is eager for members' thoughts on these changes, which would be reviewed with both Commissions in October for adoption in November, along with opening the call for projects.

Chair McKay then asked for questions and feedback from the Working Group.

Ms. Allen asked about the extent to which scores might change with these proposed modifications to the technical evaluation process. Mr. Owen answered that staff evaluated past projects with the proposed modifications and they only resulted in minor changes.

Ms. Rishell asked about adding EEAs and whether they overlap with activity centers. Mr. Owen responded that there may be some areas where EEAs and activity centers are overlaid on top of one another. The evaluation would look at whether projects connect one or both at either end, so the revision would create more opportunities for projects to receive higher scores under the accessibility factor.

Ms. Garvey asked when Commuter Choice began. Mr. Owen responded that I-66 Commuter Choice began in 2017 and I-395/95 Commuter Choice began in 2019. The upcoming funding cycle will be the third on the I-395/95 corridor.

Mr. McKay asked whether the \$45-48 million available for new projects is the same as previous rounds. Mr. Owen said that \$22.5 million was available in the first cycle and \$30 million in the second, but not all of the funding was allocated. The program is funded by Transurban via concessionaire payments to the Commonwealth usually totaling \$15 million per year. He stated that there is more carryover funding this round.

Ms. Bagley asked about the 50% cap on funds going to transit operations and whether it is possible to have a discussion on changing that requirement. Mr. Owen responded that it is a requirement of the program's Memoranda of Agreement with the Commonwealth, adding that the requirement is likely to help facilitate a balance in investments across various modes through the program. Ms. Mattice added that the 50% cap is specifically for transit operations such as fuel, driver salaries and the like. She noted that transit capital projects and other transit-adjacent projects do not count toward the 50% operations cap.

Mr. Meyer asked whether carryover funds were anticipated and whether they would remain in future years. Mr. Owen answered the team is looking to invest as much of the available funding as possible. He stated that staff is encouraging eligible applicants to submit larger capital project

proposals given the amount available and would hope to see a smaller carryover balance, if any, next round.

Mr. Boddye asked whether greenhouse gas reduction is part of the evaluation process. Mr. Owen said that it is not since greenhouse gas reduction is not a program goal in the Memoranda of Agreement, but that anticipated greenhouse gas reductions are now estimated and presented as part of building the rationale for adoption of a Program of Projects.

Other Business

Chair McKay asked if there was any other business for the Working Group. There was no further discussion.

Future Meetings

Chair McKay provided closing remarks including indicating that the next Working Group meeting will be held in Spring 2023, once staff have completed their evaluations and identified a draft Program of Projects to consider.

Ms. Bagley said she would follow up with staff on questions related to proposed changes to the technical evaluation process.

The Joint Commission Working Group meeting adjourned at 4:41 p.m.