

**NVTC PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING SUMMARY  
NVTC Suite #230 Conference Room  
2300 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Virginia  
Public Streaming via YouTube  
February 23, 2022**

**NVTC Program Advisory Committee Members Present:**

David Snyder, Chair  
Sarah Bagley  
John Foust  
Libby Garvey  
David Meyer

**NVTC Program Advisory Committee Members Not Present:**

Mike Turner

**Staff and Others Present:**

Kate Mattice, NVTC Executive Director  
Allan Fye  
Adam Hager  
Ben Owen  
Sophie Spiliotopoulos  
Silas Sullivan  
Melissa Walker  
Todd Horsley (DRPT)

Program Advisory Committee Chair Snyder called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Chair 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 the YouTube stream for the public and staff. Chair Snyder asked Mr. Fye to conduct a roll call. Mr. Fye determined a quorum was present and introduced staff.

Libby Garvey arrived at 4:04 p.m.

Chair Snyder asked for any changes to the summary of the September 13, 2021 Program Advisory Committee meeting. Committee members accepted the summary with no changes. Chair Snyder then outlined the meeting agenda's topics: a guiding programming strategy for I-66 Commuter Choice for FY 2023-2024, the Envision Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit project update and FY 2023 DRPT grants. He asked Ms. Mattice to offer a few upfront remarks.

Ms. Mattice noted that the committee has been convened a little earlier in the Commuter Choice program development process this year given the continuing set of complex circumstances related to the program including the amount of funding available and the demand for transit-based commuter services. She noted the committee was not being asked to endorse anything today, but rather agree on a guiding programming strategy so that approving a Program of Projects will be straightforward in a couple months once project scoring is complete.

#### I-66 Commuter Choice FY 2023-2024 Application Eligibility Results and Programming Approach

Mr. Owen opened the I-66 Commuter Choice portion of the discussion by noting 11 total applications were received for FY 2023-2024 funding, totaling \$23.1 million in funding requests. He added that staff reviewed the proposals' eligibility per the I-66 program's Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and established policy in consultation with the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) and that nine projects were deemed eligible. Mr. Owen stated that one project application was withdrawn by its applicant and one project was deemed ineligible during the initial eligibility screening process as it would support few peak-period, peak-direction trips on the I-66 Inside the Beltway corridor. Of the nine eligible projects, there are four enhanced bus services, two rail capital improvements, one TDM strategy and two access to transit projects.

Mr. Owen confirmed, in response to a question from Chair Snyder, that the committee was not being asked to approve or endorse a Program of Projects today. Chair Snyder then indicated that he would like to explore whether a variation of the City of Falls Church's Route 7 bus service proposal from the last funding round could still be considered for funding now that the city's WMATA subsidy had increased. Ms. Mattice and Mr. Owen indicated that they would follow up with him on the matter.

Mr. Owen then summarized staff's proposed programming strategy to maximize long-term benefits and performance certainty, considering complexities at hand with transit demand and revenue availability. He noted that the overall situation is better than in the last funding round and looking up as more employers are beginning to institute return-to-office plans. Subject to individual proposals' scoring results, staff proposes to prioritize, in descending order, rail capital projects, bus service renewals, TDM strategies, bus service expansions, and then access to transit improvements for funding consideration. He noted that there is currently an expected \$12 million in funding available for this program.

Ms. Bagley asked how much funding was available before the pandemic. Mr. Owen said that the MOA for the I-66 corridor stipulates that NVTC should receive approximately \$30 million every two years, most of which comes from Inside the Beltway tolls.

Mr. Foust asked for clarification regarding the Commonwealth's obligation to NVTC in the MOA and whether there was a minimum guaranteed payment. Mr. Owen said that there is no minimum guaranteed payment to NVTC, as VDOT cannot transfer I-66 Inside the Beltway toll revenue that it does not collect. Chair Snyder asked staff to provide the committee with the MOA's language on the matter. Ms. Mattice added that once VDOT covers its operations and maintenance cost, NVTC receives up to at least its MOA-prescribed payments.

Mr. Meyer asked who provides an audit of VDOT's finances to ensure their accounting is value-free and unbiased. Ms. Mattice said that staff would follow up directly with VDOT and provide a response to the committee.

Mr. Foust asked for examples of rail capital projects and for clarification on why access to transit projects were at the bottom of the prioritized set of project categories. Mr. Owen identified the Ballston-MU Metrorail West Entrance and the Manassas Park VRE Station Parking Garage as the two rail proposals and noted that potential Commuter Choice funding would leverage over \$170 million in total funding across the two projects. He further explained that the access to transit projects have a tougher time demonstrating peak-period, peak-direction throughput. Ms. Mattice clarified that the two access to transit projects are trails that would provide a long useful life.

Mr. Foust asked whether this was the first time the Ballston-MU West Entrance project was seeking Commuter Choice funding. Ms. Mattice and Ms. Garvey explained that Arlington County had applied for the project in the last funding round, but withdrew it from consideration once it became clear that Commuter Choice would not have enough available funding to support the project.

Chair Snyder noted that it can sometimes be difficult to fund projects like trails and sidewalks in other programs. Ms. Mattice pointed to the challenge of funding such projects with Commuter Choice given the provisions of the MOA that require benefits to peak-period, peak-direction I-66 Inside the Beltway toll payers.

Ms. Garvey asked whether any data was available regarding use of the proposed trails. Ms. Mattice said this is generally a new space for Commuter Choice, but that staff would review available projections in the technical evaluation stage of program development and, should any trail projects receive funding, work with funding recipients to identify ways to measure usage.

Mr. Foust and Ms. Bagley asked about the environmental benefits of projects and how they factor into scoring. Mr. Owen said that the committee would be provided with estimated greenhouse gas and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction benefits for the staff-recommended Program of Projects, though these considerations are not part of the adopted technical evaluation process.

Regarding next steps, Mr. Owen said technical evaluation and scoring would take place in March before the PAC reconvenes in April to endorse a draft Program of Projects. A public comment period would take place from mid-April to mid-May and the Commission would be asked to approve the program in June.

Mr. Foust noted that the committee discussed zero-emission buses at its last meeting. He suggested, at a minimum, that applicants defend and justify their proposal for diesel buses prior to being considered for Commuter Choice funding. Mr. Owen noted that staff now ask applicants during the pre-application process whether they have considered zero-emission buses for proposed transit service expansions. Ms. Garvey and Mr. Meyer noted some of the difficulties in immediately switching from diesel to electric, including quickly changing technologies.

Envision Route 7 BRT Update

Mr. Fye provided a high-level overview of the Envision Route 7 BRT project. He said the project is currently in Phase 4 which is a mobility analysis, a very technical project component related to travel time benefits and impacts on traffic operations. This phase also has a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process to help facilitate public understanding of the project.

Ms. Garvey asked whether staff is collaborating with the District of Columbia or Maryland. Mr. Fye said there are many conversations that take place with each entity, but they are not directly involved in the Envision Route 7 BRT project.

Mr. Fye said NVTC is working closely with the consulting team on data collection and the existing traffic simulation model. In the summer, he said the project team would begin to explore future traffic demand modeling and simulation and prepare for the public outreach process which would commence in the fall. He said the PAC would continue to be briefed as the project moves forward.

Ms. Garvey asked if any traffic simulation visuals were available as a part of this project. Mr. Fye said he was not sure whether it was available but would check with the consultant team.

Mr. Fye then discussed the Envision Route 7 Strategic Implementation Plan. He indicated this was a complementary effort led by NVTC that would address project governance, phased implementation and strategic funding decisions. Mr. Fye noted this plan would require engagement with the committee, Commission and staff. This would be a partnership between NVTC and Fairfax County. Lastly, Mr. Fye said staff would seek approval to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) at the May Commission meeting.

Ms. Mattice highlighted the importance of developing a game plan at this stage so that funding and implementation can be pulled off seamlessly.

#### FY 2023 DRPT Grants

Mr. Fye provided an overview of two grants NVTC will be seeking for FY 2023. The first is the Northern Virginia Regional Bus Analysis which builds on work from 2016 and will help address service gaps, identify opportunities for service coordination and develop a regional overview of financial needs.

The second is the Northern Virginia Zero-Emission Bus Strategic Plan. He reminded the committee of the work NVTC undertook in 2021 related to zero-emission buses and said this would build on completed work. This regional, coordinated effort would identify economies of scale for implementation and purchasing and ensure regional compatibility.

Mr. Foust asked about the timing of the Northern Virginia Zero-Emission Bus Strategic Plan. Mr. Fye said this study would take 12-18 months and each jurisdiction would have an implementation plan.

Ms. Bagley asked about the budget for each study and how the local match works. Mr. Fye explained that the 50% local match requirement for each effort would be broken down according

to regular formulas that determine local contributions to NVTC. He said staff would follow up and provide more concrete figures.

#### Other Business / Future Meetings

Chair Snyder asked if there is there any other discussion for the committee. He noted that the next PAC meeting would be April 14 at 4:00 p.m. Mr. Foust noted he would not be available at the time of the next meeting and Chair Snyder asked staff to check once more to see if there was a time that could accommodate all members (the meeting was subsequently moved to 8:30 a.m. on the same day).

Chair Snyder adjourned the meeting at 4:59 p.m.