

**NVTC PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY
Via Electronic Participation
Public Streaming via YouTube
September 15, 2022**

NVTC Program Advisory Committee Members Present:

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

Staff and Others Present:

Kate Mattice, NVTC Executive Director
Monique Blyther
Allan Fye
Matt Friedman
Adam Hager
Xavier Harmony
Ben Owen
Melissa Walker
Ronnetta Zack-Williams

Program Advisory Committee Chair Snyder called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. He noted that staff followed procedures and guidelines to give notice to committee members, the Commission, 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 indicated a quorum was present. He then introduced staff.

Chair Snyder asked for any changes to the summary of the April 14, 2022 Program Advisory Committee meeting. Committee members accepted the summary with no changes. Chair Snyder then outlined the meeting agenda's topics: I-395/95 Commuter Choice FY 2024-2025 Call for Projects, NVTC's strategic planning efforts for the Envision Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit project and deployment of zero-emission buses by Northern Virginia's transit operators.

Commuter Choice Program

Mr. Owen opened his presentation by noting that staff seeks to make minor changes to the Commuter Choice technical evaluation process this fall in tandem with opening the next call for projects in the I-395/95 corridor. He explained the four current evaluation criteria – technical merit, annualized cost effectiveness, applicant preference and interagency collaboration – of which technical merit, which comprises factors that assess projects’ support for program 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 the full Commission as well as PRTC in October for adoption in November, along with opening the I-395/95 call for projects.

Mr. Foust asked whether fare revenue is factored into calculating annualized cost effectiveness. Mr. Owen confirmed that only the subsidy cost is evaluated. He added that annualized cost effectiveness looks at the useful life of the project, which is a maximum of two years for transit operations.

Mr. Foust asked whether the Commission could make changes to project rankings that result from scoring. Mr. Owen confirmed that the Commission may prioritize projects for funding as it deems appropriate, accounting for scores and public comment.

Mr. Turner asked for an explanation of the applicant preference and diversion mitigation measures. For applicant preference, Mr. Owen explained that each applicant receives credit in the evaluation process for their identified highest priority project of the applications they submit. Diversion mitigation looks at the ability of a project to absorb trips that might be shifted from the expressway onto local streets or arterials due to pricing or congestion. The scoring for diversion mitigation is based solely on the type of project.

Chair Snyder asked if the changes to the technical evaluation process would apply to both the I-395/95 and I-66 corridors. Mr. Owen confirmed that they would. Chair Snyder then asked about the timing for the next I-66 Commuter Choice call for projects and the amount of toll revenue that VDOT is now collecting on I-66 Inside the Beltway. Mr. Owen answered that the call for projects would open in fall 2023 and that VDOT’s collections continue to rebound: while VDOT’s payments to NVTC during fiscal year 2022 totaled nearly \$4 million, projections for fiscal year 2023 anticipate about \$10 million, close to the expected payout figure for the year in the I-66 Memorandum of Agreement.

Ms. Garvey joined the discussion at about 5:15 p.m.

Transit Resource Center

Mr. Harmony provided an update on the Envision Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. He stated that staff has started the Strategic Implementation Plan which will address project governance, phased implementation and strategic funding decisions. He noted a kick-off meeting was held with NVTC's consultant in August and has since then received a stakeholder engagement plan from the consultant.

Mr. Harmony stated that there is a public meeting coming up on the mobility study component of the project. He also noted there would be public pop-up events throughout the corridor to help advertise the meeting, workshops with jurisdictional staff leadership and an update to the Commission this fall.

Chair Snyder asked whether there would be pop-up events in Fairfax County. Mr. Foust said he would be supportive of this and Ms. Bagley asked whether there would be one in Alexandria. Mr. Harmony clarified that this current phase ends at Seven Corners and that Alexandria would be assessed in a later phase.

Mr. Foust asked whether the public meeting at Meridian High School would be in-person and include a virtual attendance option. Mr. Harmony said it was in-person, but there would be options to watch and listen online. Mr. Foust suggested staff make any presentations available online and that the public be able to submit comments online for a period. He then asked if there was a flyer to advertise the public meeting and any pop-ups. Mr. Harmony responded that the team is actively working on materials and will soon distribute these items. Ms. Mattice noted that the pop-up events are meant to help steer the public to the public meeting.

Ms. Garvey asked about the intent of the traffic simulation and demand modeling analysis and what might be presented to the public. Mr. Harmony stated that the focus at the October public meeting would be to cover the existing conditions in the study corridor. This would help identify impacts on existing transit service should the BRT be implemented.

Mr. Foust recommended staff coordinate with Fairfax County and City of Falls Church transportation staff and observed that the public would want to know when the project might wrap up.

Transit Technology Program

Mr. Fye noted that proposals are due on September 16, 2022 for the Regional Zero-Emission Bus Strategic Plan and staff anticipate awarding a contract in November. He added that there will be a Transit Technology Workshop with jurisdiction and transit agency staff this fall. Mr. Fye stated that he and Program Analyst Ronnetta Zack-Williams will be in California next week presenting on the plan and its intended outcomes.

Mr. Fye added that the Regional Fare Collection Strategic Plan is moving forward and the associated Fare Collection Working Group is continuing to meet.

Ms. Bagley asked whether fare evasion is a topic of study within the work NVTC is doing. Mr. Fye responded that the fare collection work is focused on the technology side, not fare evasion. He added that there is technology available for bus operators to count passengers who do not pay in a discreet way.

Ms. Garvey asked whether any work was being done to allow for fare collection beyond only tapping a SmarTrip card and whether passes for certain periods of time might be allowed. Mr. Fye stated that there is some work taking place, noting some passes already exist.

Mr. Meyer noted that all fare decisions are local and that circumstances for one provider might not fit another's. He described the unique circumstances in the City of Fairfax that led to the city going fare-free.

Other Business

Chair Snyder asked if there is there any other discussion for the committee. There was no further discussion.

Future Meetings

Chair Snyder stated that staff would follow up regarding the timing of the next committee meeting and he adjourned the meeting at 5:54 p.m.