

**Draft MINUTES OF
MEETING OF THE COMMONWEALTH TRANSPORTATION BOARD
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ROUTE 29**

Culpeper District Office – Auditorium
1601 Orange Road
Culpeper, Virginia

October 8, 2010 – 10:00a.m.

The meeting of the Route 29 Subcommittee of Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) was held in the auditorium of the Culpeper District Office at 1601 Orange Road in Culpeper, Virginia on October 8, 2010, at 10:00a.m.

Attendees: CTB Members: J. Douglas Koelemay, Jim Rich and Mark Peake and former CTB member John J. “Butch” Davies III, VDOT staff: Jim Utterback, Rob Cary, Marsha Fiol, Brent Sprinkle, Jeff Kessler, Michael Clements, Marshall Barron, Charles Proctor, Randy Hodgson and Charlie Rasnick, Amy Inman, (DRPT), Lori L. Pound (OAG), and Joe Springer - Parsons Transportation Group (PTG), also present: Steve Williams Thomas Jefferson PDC Gary Christie, Central VA MPO, Rex Hammond, Lynchburg Chamber of Commerce Morgan Butler, SELC and Rob Lanham, Cedar Mountain Stone

1. & 2. Welcome and Public Comment

Chairman Koelemay welcomed everyone. He then asked if there anyone from the public that may want to speak to the Committee. No one from the public asked to speak. Mr. Koelemay offered to allow the opportunity for public as part of the Committee’s discussion of the work items.

3. Minutes of the August 27, 2010

Minutes of the August 27, 2010 meeting were approved as presented.

4. Status of the Committee’s work on the CTB Directives of December 17, 2009

Chairman Koelemay briefed the Committee on the status of the Subcommittee’s work. He said that the draft documents for developing the Corridor Master Plans (CMP) and the plans for restarting the discussions in the Charlottesville and Buckland/Gainesville areas would be presented to the CTB at the December 2010 meeting. He indicated that the local CMP is an important process for addressing the different segments of the corridor since the challenges differ greatly between individual sections. He said that he is comfortable with the consistency of committee’s recommendations with other processes (the Statewide Plan) and they will not supplant the Statewide Plan but will be a part of the planning process.

5. Plan to minimize the number of traffic control signals on Route 29 and the CoSS (the proposal to develop a Corridor Master Plan)

Charlie Rasnick said that the plan to minimize the number of traffic signals on Route 29 and the Corridors of Statewide Significance (CoSS) is more complicated than simply setting a policy that discourages the use of traffic signals. There must be a plan to provide alternatives that serve access needs for new developments and land uses that generate or attract local traffic along the CoSS. The plan has evolved into a proposed process for developing Corridor Master Plans (CMP) that include ways to serve local traffic to new developments as well as serve through traffic.

The CMP will be a cooperative effort between the Localities, VDOT & DRPT and the MPOs and PDCs. The intent is to preserve the capacity of the facility, and it's function to serve through travel. The recommendation is for a CMP to be developed for each of the CoSS, as delineated in the VTrans2035 Plan.

The CMP to be effective should be refined by doing a pilot study on at least two of the CoSS and recommending and additional changes to the CMP process including any proposed legislation that may be needed. The pilot will incorporate VDOT's Access Management Regulations and DRPT's transit guidelines. Also as part of the pilot, an opportunity for the public to comment on the CMP process should be provided, following the public comments, the CTB can determine if the CMP should be applied to all of the CoSS.

Mr. Koelemay indicated that often the decisions made for different time periods (20 - 30 years, and the 6 year program are not coordinated. The CMP will ensure that the multiple objectives; safety, congestion, capacity, transit, etc. are addressed on each corridor. The CTB doesn't want to stifle development but needs to protect these corridors for through travel.

Mr. Peake asked, what happens when there is not agreement in the corridor? What happens if we do the CMP and there is no agreement by the Locality to (incorporate it into their comprehensive plan? Mr. Koelemay said that we need to place emphasis on the CMP work up-front and let the Localities know that having a CMP will potentially help with earlier transportation improvements. Mr. Peake: Do we need legislation to cure problems where Localities build more than they had originally planned, or change their position on a transportation improvement such as the Charlottesville Bypass?

In response to Mr. Peake's questions on the Charlottesville Bypass, Charlie Rasnick said that the CMP will not address the Charlottesville Bypass issues. But when one considers that the Bypass would have connected to Route 29 just north of the bridge over the Rivanna River and the area north of the proposed connection is now very congested, the CMP would have been effective in protecting that area of Route 29. So from the point of the proposed Bypass connection, north to Ruckersville (approximately 7 miles) the development access has created local traffic congestion. Had the CMP been in place,

there would have been some protections to limit the number of entrances and traffic signals on Route 29. Today, the only way to address the congestion is to retrofit the corridor with inter-parcel connections and parallel service roads and grade separations at certain locations, and it will be very expensive.

Mr. Koelemay said that for the first time in our history, there will be a process to follow when development is proposed. Mr. Peake said that he agreed with the CMP process, but wondered if it could be enforced. Mr. Koelemay said the AGs office will need to address this and Lori Pound (AAG) indicated that while there is authority for the agencies to develop the CMP, but it would be difficult to force the Localities to implement it so there is the need for build consensus with the Localities. Mr. Peake asked how we can expect to hold a consensus for 20+ years and Mr. Rich said he had recommended a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the agencies and Localities as the key to building and keeping a consensus on the plan. Also, the other element that should be used is withholding funds for the area if the consensus is violated.

Mr. Koelemay asked the committee if they felt we were on the right track and Mr. Davies said that he shares the concern for enforcing the CMP, but there needs to be a means to hold the leaders accountable for their actions. He said that a MOU in place 20 years ago would have been very helpful in controlling the number of entrances and traffic signals on Route 29. Also, new technologies need to be employed in traffic control and getting information to the drivers, this will make the corridors more efficient.

Mr. Rich asked if the CMPs will consider transit circulation plans he said that previous transit plans had broad public support, but when it came to implementing, the projects stalled. He also asked whether roundabouts will be considered as part of the plan. Amy Inman said that DRPT is asking each transit agency to develop a 6-year plan so we can see how to expand the system. Regarding roundabouts, they will be considered and recommended as part of the CMP. Mr. Rich indicated that in European countries such as France, there are road networks that exclusively use roundabouts to control the intersections and they work very well.

At the conclusion of the discussion, it was agreed that there were a few edits that were needed and the CTB Resolution needs to direct the development of the pilot study for the Corridor Master Plans along with opportunities for public input on the process.

6. Plan to Improve Mobility/Accessibility – Charlottesville (Proposed Plan to initiate cross-jurisdictional discussions)

Mr. Rasnick discussed the current approach which includes the subcommittee's recommendation that a separate meeting of the elected leaders be held in the Lynchburg area, including leaders from the southern tier of the Route 29 corridor, to determine the transportation issues that affect their area. The Lynchburg area meeting would be held concurrently with the proposed meeting in the Charlottesville area, and the meeting would be lead by a professional facilitator.

Mr. Peake asked if other leaders would be involved and whether it will include the public? Mr. Rasnick replied that when the subcommittee was discussing the meetings, they indicated that the first meeting should consist of a small group of elected leaders and they would work with the facilitator to identify the wider group to invite to the second and subsequent meetings. The initial group would also outline any areas of consensus and topics for the second and subsequent meetings.

Mr. Davies informed the subcommittee that a recent poll showed that there is significant interest in a Bypass for the Charlottesville area, possibly to the east. Determining the location will be the biggest obstacle to overcome so these discussions will be important.

Mr. Koelemay said the groups need to remain relatively small for discussion purposes. Also, the process outlined by the subcommittee does not lead to any one set of conclusions so the groups in each area will be free to determine their own list of priorities and consensus items. There may never be a joint meeting between the leaders from these greater geographic areas, but the results of each meeting will be available for the CTB to direct any further action in either area.

Mr. Peake asked how this activity would be paid for and Mr. Koelemay said the CTB will need to address that, possibly through reprogramming of funds.

7. Improving mobility and accessibility in the Gainesville, Buckland and Haymarket area

To give the current status for everyone on the subcommittee, Charlie Rasnick outlined the process that the members of the Subcommittee had discussed and indicated that Mr. Rich was to discuss the informal steps to initiate the discussion. Mr. Koelemay said the core process for the Buckland discussions is similar to those proposed for the Charlottesville area, the meetings are essential as we look for a consensus. In the Buckland area, the discussions need to begin informally and migrate to a formal process.

Mr. Rich said the committee has set out something that makes sense and he indicated that the Secretary was in agreement with beginning informally. He suggested that the proposed process be revised to remove the Secretary of Transportation as the 'lead' in beginning the talks. Mr. Koelemay said that we would welcome the Secretary as the 'point' on this effort. The Secretary may want to send a letter of invitation to the participants asking for their participation in the discussions. Others could be invited to the discussions after the initial meeting.

Mr. Koelemay asked the other members if they were comfortable with moving forward with presenting the recommendations at the December CTB meeting and all agreed. He said he appreciates the efforts of Ken White, Peter Schwartz, Sharon Pandak, and Butch Davies for their guidance. We now need to get our colleges on the CTB to see the proposals in advance and understand that it needs to be practical, and there remain the

transition issues. In moving forward, the Memorandum of Understanding are an important tool in committing to the CMP. He asked if there were any comments from anyone else, Mr. Peake indicated that he understands the differences in approaches and he felt this was a good process

The Gainesville/Buckland/Haymarket proposal for the cross-jurisdictional discussions will be edited and sent to the Committee for final review.

8. Next Steps

Mr. Koelema said that the Subcommittee has concluded its' work, the next steps are to champion the recommendations to the CTB and others. Staff will make the final edits on the three documents that will be presented to the full CTB on December 8, 2010.