

CTB Rail and Transit Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
Hyatt Regency Crystal City
2799 Jeff Davis Highway, Arlington, VA
8:30 am
May 14, 2019

The Meeting began at 8:43 am

CTB Rail Subcommittee Members Present: DRPT Director Jennifer Mitchell, Ray Smoot, Mary Hynes, Stephen Johnsen and John Malbon.

1. Approval of April 9th Minutes-Ray Smoot moved to approve the minutes, Mary Hynes seconded, and the minutes were unanimously approved.
2. Director's Report-Director Mitchell gave her Director's report. She said that more information is needed to evaluate the Bedford station application. Director Mitchell said that new ridership numbers are needed. She said that DRPT has programmed three hundred thousand dollars in the Six Year Improvement Plan (SYIP) for a planning study for the Bedford station and has programmed \$325,000 to run an Amtrak thruway bus from Bedford to Lynchburg for two years. Mary Hynes asked about the last mile connectivity once travelers got to Bedford. Director Mitchell said that how travelers get from the station to their final destination will be looked at in the planning study.

Director Mitchell said that DRPT is in the process of developing quantitative scoring method for the Rail Preservation (Short Line) fund. She said that DRPT will be working with the Virginia Railroad Association to collaborate on this process and will be following up with the Rail and Transit subcommittee during the process. Director Mitchell reminded the committee that the SYIP hearings have just wrapped up. She said that there were 28 speakers at the last meeting held on May 13th in the NOVA district.

Director Mitchell said that there will be an application for a Rail Industrial Access project for Interchange Cold Storage that will be presented during the subcommittee meeting and at the workshop. The CTB member for that district, Dixon Whitworth, has received a tour of the facility.

Director Mitchell gave an update on Amtrak and said that Amtrak is working on upgrading WIFI equipment to improve service and that the 15% discount for Virginia had started in March. She said that April ridership was up by 14.8%. She said that there was

a net increase of 8500 passengers since the second Norfolk train began running in March. She also said that Roanoke Ridership was up 9.5% in April.

Director Mitchell said that there would also be a presentation at the workshop on the I-66 Commuter Choice Program.

3. Statewide Integrated Mobility Plan-Jennifer DeBruhl, Chief of Transit

Jennifer DeBruhl gave an update on the statewide integrated mobility plan. She said that Integrated Mobility is the sharing of a transit asset such as a vehicle, scooter or bike.

The following discussion points were noted.

- a. Mary Hynes asked if there was a way to standardize how the Commonwealth is counting those that are using bike and pedestrian trails. Mary Hynes said that she would like to see a CTB policy created to address this.
- b. Ray Smoot asked what the statewide technology contract provides. Jennifer DeBruhl provided an example which was driver assistance technology that could be retrofitted to a bus and show the driver when a pedestrian has entered their path. Ray Smoot asked if local governments could use these contracts. Jennifer DeBruhl and Director Mitchell said they could if they were structured that way and if they were a grantee.
- c. Stephen Johnsen asked what was being done on the innovation side of things. Jennifer DeBruhl said that DRPT is working very closely with Cathy McGhee, the Director of Innovation for the Secretary of Transportation. Jen said that the state is taking some risks from being out front with technology but is doing what it can to mitigate risk.
- d. Mary Hynes asked for the definition of micro transit. Jennifer DeBruhl said that it is a service with some flexibility in the route, but that has a defined service area. An enhanced van pool is an example. It can accommodate people with different levels of mobility. She said that the research component and partnerships Universities helps mitigate risk.
- e. Mary Hynes pointed out that with the new modalities there is still infrastructure that needs to be maintained and the state needs to make sure that the new modes are contributing to maintenance funds.
- f. Jennifer Mitchell said that DRPT is working with vendors to see what micro transit services they could provide in rural or small urban area.
- g. Jennifer DeBruhl discussed the commuter app that DRPT is working to develop. John Malbon mentioned that the “Waze” app tries to match you up with carpoolers and suggested that DRPT look into working with them on that technology. Jennifer Mitchell said that Uber and Lyft suggest carpools as well.

Jennifer DeBruhl clarified for Ray Smoot that the commuter app does not provide on demand service, but matches riders with carpools and vanpools.

- h. Rail Industrial Access Application for Interchange Cold Storage Facility-Jeremy Latimer, Director of Rail Transportation Programs

Director Mitchell opened up the presentation and said that this application is exciting because it is in the I-81 corridor. Jeremy Latimer reviewed the application. The following discussion points were noted:

- i. Ray Smoot asked about the carload threshold required of Rail Industrial access applicants. Director Mitchell said that the CTB had made revisions to the policy to encourage applications and as long as what is shipped by rail doesn't go below the threshold indicated on the application there is no claw back. Ray Smoot asked when claw back happens. Jeremy Latimer said claw back may happen after 6 years of a company not reaching their minimum threshold. He also said that if a company ceases operating or shipping by rail they may owe the Commonwealth.
- j. Jeremy Latimer noted that after the recession 40% of the Rail Industrial Access grantees owed so DRPT went back and took another look at the program to understand why grantees were failing.
- k. Jeremy Latimer said that the forms that measure productivity go out in July and most of the information is received by September. From a monitoring point of view Mary Hynes said that it would be helpful to bring these reports to the subcommittee.

4. DC2RVA Update-Emily Stock, Rail Planning Manager

Emily gave an update on DC2RVA. The following discussion points were noted.

- a. John Malbon asked if the CSX right of way was big enough to add more tracks than what had been looked at in the DC2RVA study. Emily said that it may be possible in some areas to engineer additional tracks above and beyond what was cleared environmentally by the DC2RVA study.
- b. Ray Smoot asked if the study planned for two stops in Richmond. Director Mitchell said that there would be a stop at Main Street station and at Staples Mill and said that it is common in this kind of network to have a downtown station and a station in the suburbs.
- c. Ray Smoot asked if the Commonwealth was lining this study up with the large infrastructure appropriation from the Federal government. Director Mitchell said that there is a strong Federal interest in the project because it connects the northeast corridor to the southeast. She said that an additional bridge is needed at Long Bridge from a resiliency standpoint.
- d. Stephen Johnsen said that other states from up and down the coast need to be involved because Long Bridge is a critical mass issue. Director Mitchell said that

the states partners in North Carolina are aware and supportive. Director Mitchell said that there will be a VA-NC High Speed Rail Compact meeting in July.

5. Public Comment-Rob Whitfield stood for public comment.
 - a. He asked if there is land in Arlington County where VRE trains can be stored during the day. Director Mitchell did not know but says that DRPT is funding the expansion of the Broad Run storage facilities.
 - b. He asked about the structural integrity of the James River Bridge going into Main Street Station that is 100 years old and if it was sound enough for increased capacity. Emily Stock said that the DC2RVA study incorporated improvements to the bridge to safely accommodate the recommended passenger trains, but is not familiar with the existing condition of the CSX freight bridge, which does not currently carry passenger trains.
 - c. His final question was why the lease agreement with CSX was not finalized. Jennifer Mitchell said that is ongoing.

6. The meeting adjourned at 9:41