

**Draft MINUTES OF
MEETING OF THE COMMONWEALTH TRANSPORTATION BOARD
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ROUTE 29 (As Approved on 3/3/2010)**

Culpeper District Office – Auditorium
1601 Orange Road
Culpeper, Virginia

March 3, 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 March 3, 2010, at 10:00a.m.

Attendees: CTB Members: John J. “Butch” Davies III, Peter B. Schwartz, Douglas Koelemay and Sharon Pandak, VDOT staff: Jim Utterback, Marsha Fiol, Brent Sprinkel, Helen Cuervo, Ben Mannell, and Charlie Rasnick, Amy Inman, (DRPT), Joe Springer - Parsons Transportation Group (PTG) and interested citizens: Rob Lanham

1. Introductions and Welcome

Chairman Koelemay welcomed everyone and thanked the District Administrator for hosting the meeting.

2. Minutes of the February 17, 2010

Minutes of the February 17, 2010 meeting were briefly discussed and with one correction, they were approved.

3. Process for Strategic Corridor Studies

Charles Rasnick and Joe Springer presented a draft memo on the Proposed Process for Studying Corridors of Statewide Significance. (Agenda Item #3) The background shows how corridor studies fit into the transportation planning and project development process. The paper cites examples of the national best practices for corridor planning along with “Considerations” - the issues that need to be considered when designing a Corridor Study. The recommended process outline was briefly described for the Committee.

Mr. Schwartz stated that the staff had failed to deliver an acceptable corridor study plan. The study plan needs to include elected leaders, local staff and the identified stake holders. People need to have a sense of ownership in the plan and the study plan needs to include ways to get local “buy-in”. A large summit meeting on a corridor will not work because of the posturing by every elected official. The local leaders need to be given a chance to participate or not and they need to know their views are valued, but if they don’t participate, the plan will still be developed. A smaller group meeting could work out some of the issues. For example: Elected representatives of Prince William County

and Fauquier County need to be in the same room to discuss and to out work some of their differences on the Route 29 Corridor.

Ms. Pandak commented that we could not rely on MPOs or PDCs to represent the views of local governments or for the MPO/PDC representatives to share information with other members of their Board. Land use decision making is by local governments so a corridor study needs to show the link between land use decisions and transportation. There is a detachment between the planning process and the corridor studies. The study needs to say that VTrans is the basis for statewide transportation planning and that the corridors area vital part of the statewide plan. We need to show why the corridor study is important and how the CTB will use the study to put future projects in the Six Year Improvement Program.

Mr. Swartz said that the study process must get into the locality's transportation needs and to do that the study team must spend some time with the local jurisdictions to get input on "what helps" and "what hinders" their transportation and also identify the toxic issues. Localities need to have some incentive (carrot) for including VDOT's corridor recommendations their comprehensive plans. Getting the "carrot" in front of local leaders is critical in showing them the benefits of supporting the corridor plan.

Mr. Davies stated that principal failure of the study was the failure to generate community input and "buy-in" from the local governments. People are concerned over not having transportation funding and are asking "Why are we going through with this plan (for the Route 29 Corridor) when we have no money for transportation for the foreseeable future?"

Mr. Davies further stated that south of Charlottesville, as a result of agreements by the localities, the Lynchburg Bypass, Danville Bypass and other improvements were built. We need a way to focus on reaching local elected leaders and boards such as the Chamber people to get local support of the plan. Otherwise, any future plans will fail.

Ms. Pandak said we should have a map showing improvements that have been made, those improvements that have been identified previously and those that have been recommended in the plan. We need to act quickly to complete the plan in the Buckland and Charlottesville areas. The study should show how smaller (\$5-10 million range) improvement projects can help localities. Maybe we need to say in the study that the CTB will consider including the identified improvements it the Six Year Improvement Program. This "carrot" may help get the buy-in we need. There may be a need for more transit in the corridor.

Amy Inman indicated that transit can take pressure off the highway network.

Mr. Koelemay said that there needs to be an expectation by the localities that there will be some action from the plan to implement some of the recommended improvements.

4. Route 29 Plan Report (Strike-Through)

Charles Rasnick informed the Committee that the Draft Corridor Study Report was placed on VDOT's webpage from early November until the CTB meeting on December 17, 2009 and there were no comments for revisions during that time. A final document could be completed using the CTB Resolution and including a section in the executive summary that describes how the CTB directives are being addressed.

Staff will review the report to ensure that all comments or edits have been made through (12/17/2009). A new section will be included in the Route 29 Report to document CTB's directives for additional study. The CTB Resolution of December 17, 2009, will be included in this new section in the document.

5. Proposed Next Steps

Charles Rasnick presented an overview of the proposed steps for addressing the CTB's directives in the December 2009 Resolution: (see attachment Agenda Item #5)

- Prioritized list of Intersections to be grade separated
- Improve Mobility/Accessibility – Charlottesville
- Improve Mobility/Accessibility – Gainesville/Buckland/Haymarket
- Plan to minimize the number of traffic control signals

The Committee discussion on these four directives included several concerns.

- There should more than “making a list” to select the intersections to be grade separated. We need to talk with localities to help them understand how a cloverleaf or diamond design will serve their needs and the process needs to be collaborative with localities. Localities need help to ensure that access to new developments doesn't adversely affect the corridor.
- The proposed meetings on the Buckland and Charlottesville areas need to start with small groups of elected leaders for preliminary discussions. These initial meetings could lead to a charrette that is held over two days in each of these areas. Someone of authority in transportation possibly the Commissioner should host the meeting.
- Future corridor studies need to be broken into smaller (shorter) segments for study. This could be done by region or by localities that have similar geography, socio-economic features and transportation requirements.
- We are in a financially restricted time and cannot justify expending funds for the additional detailed information that the localities in the Charlottesville area will want for the evaluation. In addition to the cost, these studies will take considerable time to complete. Corridor studies need to have the flexibility to separate or designate certain areas that may need more detailed study but meets the general concerns for the entire corridor. As we approach each corridor, we need to consider the benefits from the expenditures for the studies.
- We need to consider the results of this study and how it can be tied to the land use and included in the localities' comprehensive plans. Further, we will need to develop a short summary statement including a timeline for concluding the work on the Buckland and

Charlottesville areas. Staff needs to take steps to begin work with the localities to incorporate the Route 29 plan recommendations into their comprehensive plans.

6. Status Report at the March CTB Meeting

Marsha Fiol will work with Mr. Koelemay and Ms. Pandak to revise the draft corridor study process for presentation at the March CTB meeting. Mr. Koelemay will also inform the CTB of the need for some additional time to complete the review and coordination in the Charlottesville and Buckland areas.

7. To Do/Assignments and Next Meeting

Need to finalize the work plan for the Charlottesville and Buckland areas and complete the study report. Staff is to provide the proposed final editing for the report at the next meeting. The next meeting of the CTB Subcommittee is scheduled for April 7, 2010, in VDOT's Warrenton Residency Office, 457 E. Shirley Avenue, Warrenton, VA 20186.

8. Surface Transportation Plan Briefing

Since members of the CTB were available, the Surface Transportation Plan was presented for their consideration. Amy Inman, DRPT and Ben Mannell presented the plan to the CTB Members.

CTB members indicated that overall, they were impressed with the effort to coordinate rail, transit, highway recommendations.

Ms. Pandak asked if, with continued downward trend in revenue estimates for transportation, if some of the recommendations (particularly in MPO areas where plan relied on constrained long range plan (CLRP) recommendations) were already out of date, since recommendations will likely have to be dropped to meet constraint. VDOT responded that MPOs have been encouraged to continue to show those needs in a MPO vision plan. This would allow for continued consistency between CLRPs and the Surface Transportation Plan.

Ms. Pandak indicated that she would like to have a presentation to the Board that provided an overview of the funding gap for transit needs in the Commonwealth, specifically related to the capital costs of Dulles Rail and Hampton Roads light rail.

CTB members indicated several things:

- 1) That they would like to see some additional emphasis on the “game changers” and prioritization—there was an acceptance that the Surface Transportation Plan is a needs-based document, but prioritization is the key to future constraint of the document. (VDOT relayed that actions to begin the prioritization effort and process to better link the plan with the Six Year Improvement Program were underway).
- 2) They would like to see more discussion of how land use and transportation tie together—ideas such as corridor preservation, access management can be

- employed. Also specific mention of how “if current development patterns continue, the transportation system will not be able to maintain mobility”.
- 3) They would like more of a transition between text of report and the recommendations tables. Suggested focus of how the VTrans goals and performance measures relate to recommendations.
 - 4) Felt that the highway recommendations tables could use some additional information in terms of a description.
 - 5) Mr. Schwartz commented on the I-66 recommendation in Fauquier as an example specifically—where did this come from, etc. VDOT explained that it was based on the growth of traffic in the corridor, with the assumption that current development patterns would continue. There was also a need to delineate where highway recommendations were for HOV or BRT accommodations.
 - 6) CTB members also indicated that they liked the emphasis on ITS solutions—this is one of the “game changers”—and felt that this needs to be a programmatic shift in investment.
 - 7) The reliance on objective performance measures provided defensible recommendations. Mr. Schwartz felt that preservation and maintenance first is not necessarily realistic or sustainable for the next 20 years. Indicated a need to look at performance targets for bridges and pavement—are they where they need to be? And once we hit those targets, let’s focus on new construction
 - 8) Members liked short range recommendations, and the opportunity to focus on potential immediate benefits and outcomes in the operation of facilities.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40pm.