



**Northern Virginia Transportation Authority**  
*The Authority for Transportation in Northern Virginia*

**MINUTES**

Thursday, June 10, 2021

7:00pm

3040 Williams Drive, Suite 200

Fairfax, VA 22031

Meeting conducted on WebEx and Live Streamed via YouTube

1. **Call to Order** Chair Randall
  - ✓ Chair Randall called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.
2. **Roll Call** Margaret Duker, Clerk
  - ✓ Voting Members: Chair Randall; Council Member Snyder; Supervisor Foust (for Chairman McKay); Chair Wheeler; Board Member Cristol; Mayor Wilson; Mayor Rishell; Mayor Meyer; Mayor Davis-Younger; Senator Boysko; Delegate Watts; Delegate Roem; Ms. Hynes; Mr. Kolb.
  - ✓ Non-Voting Members; Mayor Burk; Ms. Sinner (for D.A. Mr. Lynch); Mr. Horsley (for Ms. Mitchell).
  - ✓ Staff: Monica Backmon (Executive Director); Michael Longhi (CFO); Keith Jasper (Principal, Planning and Programming); Sree Nampoothiri (Senior Transportation Planner); Harun Rashid (Transportation Planner); Dev Sen (Financial Analyst); Margaret Duker (Board Clerk).

Other Attendees: Rob Dickerson (Council of Counsels – Prince William County); Joanna Anderson (Council of Counsels - Alexandria); Daniel Robinson (Council of Counsels – Fairfax County); MinhChau Corr (Council of Counsels – Arlington); Tracy Baynard (McGuire Woods Consulting LLC).
3. **Adoption of Resolution 21-06 to Find Need to Conduct Meeting by Electronic Communication Means during Governor’s declared State of Emergency during COVID-19 Pandemic** Chair Randall

*Recommended action: Adoption of Resolution 21-06 for Electronic Meetings During COVID-19 Pandemic*

  - ✓ Chair Randall made the motion to adopt Resolution 21- 06 to Find Need to Conduct a Meeting by Electronic Communication Means during Governor’s declared State of Emergency during COVID-19 Pandemic; seconded by Delegate Roem. Motion passed unanimously.
4. **Minutes of the May 13, 2021 Meeting**

*Recommended action: Approval [with abstentions from those who were not present]*

- ✓ Mayor Rishell moved for the acceptance of the May 13, 2021, meeting minutes; seconded by Board Member Cristol. Motion passed by 13-0-1 with Supervisor Foust abstaining as he was not at the last meeting.

## Presentation

### **5. Travel Trends in Northern Virginia: Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic**

Mr. Rashid, Transportation Planner

- ✓ Mr. Rashid presented the travel impacts caused by the pandemic in Northern Virginia, highlighting the following:
  - He noted that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) reported the lowest vehicle miles traveled in the United States in the year 2020 since 2002.
  - The Washington D.C area had 59.5%, the highest percentage of telecommuting during the pandemic when compared to other large metropolitan areas. Following the Governor's stay-at-home order on March 30, 2020, region wide traffic volumes were reduced by 49% during the PM peak periods.
  - During the same period, INRIX, a 'Big Data' analytics company also reported that the Washington D.C area experienced the largest decline (77%) in highway congestion.
  - May 2021 experienced stabilization in highway travel volumes in Northern Virginia. This is about 12% lower than pre-COVID conditions (PM peak period).
  - With regards to highway travel speeds in Northern Virginia, April 2020 saw a 21% increase in average travel speeds during PM peak periods.
  - As travel inches back to pre-COVID levels in May 2021, highway travel speed increased by 12%, still faster than pre-COVID conditions.
  - A review of transit ridership in Northern Virginia also revealed that most local buses experienced at least 66% reduction in ridership in mid-April of 2020.
  - During that same time, rail ridership saw an even greater decline with Virginia Railway Express (VRE) and Metrorail's reduction at 97% and 96% respectively.
  - Currently, local bus ridership is recovering much faster than VRE and Metrorail as these two remain at 85% and 92% lower than pre-COVID levels.
- ✓ In an update of other recent trends, Mr. Rashid noted that VRE resumed its full-service schedule in June, thereby increasing commuting options for passengers.
- ✓ Under this full schedule, VRE will operate 32 trains daily on its two lines.
- ✓ Additionally, WMATA Finance and Capital Committee has noted potential service improvements such as improvements to base service levels on bus lines and extending rail service to midnight seven days a week, on their June agenda.
- ✓ Delegate Watts asked if a year-to-date analysis could be provided at future Authority meetings owing to the dynamic nature of this information.

- ✓ Chair Randall also added that it would be helpful to have a forecast going forward regarding rail and bus ridership levels.
- ✓ Board Member Cristol added that the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) has performed a similar analysis of travel trends with a look at riders' demographics and this produced some great insights.
- ✓ Mr. Rashid ended his presentation noting that NVRTA will continue to monitor these travel trends and report back to the Authority.

### **Action Items**

#### **6. Approval of the Call for Regional Transportation Projects for the FY2022-FY2027 Six Year Program**

Mr. Jasper, Principal, Transportation Planning and Programming

*Recommended Action: Approval of the Call for Projects*

- ✓ Mr. Jasper informed Members that he is seeking Authority approval to post the Call for Regional Transportation Projects (CfRTP) for the FY2022 – 2027 Six Year Program (SYP) Update.
- ✓ He noted that the SYP is updated on a two-year cycle and this will be the sixth funding program so far and also the last one to use the current TransAction project list adopted in 2017.
- ✓ Mr. Jasper further added that this FY2022 – 2027 SYP will follow a similar process used for previous SYPs that encourages applicants to highlight how well their candidate projects complement one another as well as those in adjacent jurisdictions (for regional impact).
- ✓ In addition, he asked that applicants consider NVRTA's core values of equity, sustainability and safety when submitting applications.
- ✓ He added that all projects considered for regional revenues are subject to a comprehensive evaluation process, covering eligibility, quantitative analyses, qualitative considerations and public comment.
- ✓ He noted that per Authority approval, the application portal will be open on-line with a due date of October 1, 2021, by 5pm.
- ✓ Delegate Roem inquired about the eligibility of projects to be funded in this cycle if they are not in the current TransAction.
- ✓ Mr. Jasper responded that projects not in the current TransAction should be submitted for the next TransAction update.
- ✓ Chair Randall moved approval of the Call for Regional Transportation Projects for the FY2022 – 2027 Six Year Program Update; seconded by Delegate Roem; Motion passed unanimously.

#### **7. Approval of Revisions to Policy Number 26 – Electronic Participation in Meetings**

Mr. Longhi, CFO

*Recommended Action: Approval of Revisions*

- ✓ Mr. Longhi presented the proposed updates to Policy 26, Electronic Participation in Meetings, noting that the current policy required updating due to recent changes to the Code of Virginia, approved by the 2021 General Assembly.
- ✓ He summarized the changes as follow:
  - A physical quorum is required at the advertised location for action to be taken at any Authority or Committee meeting.
  - A request for electronic participation must be made by notifying the Authority or Committee Chair on or before the day of meeting and providing the reason for the request as well as providing the remote location from which the Member will attend electronically
  - The Member electing to participate remotely will be noted at the Roll Call, with the reason for electronic participation and the location from which the Member is participating.
  - If an electronic participation request is denied, the denial will be noted in the meeting minutes.
  - A Member’s electronic participation under an emergency or personal matter is limited to two meetings or 25% of the total meetings in a calendar year, with Authority and Committee meetings counted separately.
  - A Member’s electronic participation under caused by a medical or disability circumstance is unlimited in a calendar year, with Authority and Committee meetings tracked separately.
- ✓ Chair Randall moved Authority adoption of the changes to Policy 26 – Electronic Participation in Meetings, as delineated in the attached draft, to be effective July 1, 2021; seconded by Delegate Watts. Motion passed unanimously.

## 8. Approval of First Required Reading of Bylaws Correction

Mr. Longhi, CFO

*Recommended Action: Approval of First Review*

- ✓ Mr. Longhi informed Members that at the May meeting, the Governance and Personnel Committee (GPC) were informed of an inconsistency between the Code of Virginia and NVTA’s Bylaws.
- ✓ To resolve the inconsistency, the GPC recommends having the Executive Director’s title in NVTA’s Bylaws corrected to Chief Executive Officer to match the reference in the Code of Virginia.
- ✓ He added that the process to revise NVTA’s Bylaws requires two readings at two consecutive Authority meetings, after which this revision can be adopted.
- ✓ Chair Randall moved Authority approval of this first of two required readings to amend the NVTA Bylaws as noted in the attached draft; seconded by Delegate Watts. Motion passed unanimously.

## 9. Approval of the Reallocation of Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) funds and Regional Surface Transportation Funds (RSTP) for Loudoun County

Ms. Backmon, Executive Director

*Recommended Action: Approval of Reallocation*

- ✓ Ms. Backmon informed Authority Members that Loudoun County is requesting Authority approval to reallocate Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) and Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds from the Centreville Road/Stone Springs Boulevard Project to the Route 50 Intersection Improvements Project.
- ✓ She noted that this reallocation is needed to enable the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to meet the obligation timeline requirements.
- ✓ Ms. Backmon added that at the May 27, 2021 meeting, the RJACC recommended approval of this request.
- ✓ Chair Randall moved approval of the reallocation of Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) Funds and Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds for Loudoun County; seconded by Senator Boysko. Motion passed unanimously.

**10. Approval of the Programming of Additional RSTP funds and the Transfer of HIP/CRRSA Funds**

Dr. Nampoothiri, Senior Transportation Planner

*Recommended Action: Approval of Programming and Transfer*

- ✓ Mr. Nampoothiri provided an update of the programming of additional RSTP funds and the HIP and CRRSA (Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations) funds.
- ✓ He added that VDOT provided additional revisions which added \$20 million in RSTP funds and another \$20 million in HIP/CRRSA funds.
- ✓ Noting that NVT Staff worked with VDOT and jurisdictions to determine projects which needed these funding allocations.
- ✓ He pointed out that the Route 7 Widening project in Fairfax County is already under construction and could receive the HIP/CRRSA allocation since this project can meet the strict obligation and expenditure deadlines. An equal amount of RSTP funds from this project can be released and added to the additional \$20 million RSTP available making the total available RSTP funds \$40 million. This can then be allocated to projects across the region that had to recently absorb reductions in previously allocated funds due to changes in federal projections.
- ✓ He noted that with Authority recommendation, the lists of programmed funding allocations would be forwarded to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) for approval.
- ✓ Supervisor Foust moved Authority recommendation to the Commonwealth Transportation Board, funding approval of the proposed projects for FY2022 – 2027 CMAQ, RSTP, and HIP/CRRSA funds, as presented (attachments); seconded by Senator Boysko. Motion passed unanimously.

**11. Approval of Endorsement for Arlington and Prince William Counties and the Virginia Railway Express' Applications to the USDOT for Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Applications**

Ms. Backmon, Executive Director

*Recommended Action: Approval of Letters of Endorsement*

- ✓ Ms. Backmon notified Members that Arlington and Prince William Counties as well as the Virginia Railway Express (VRE), are seeking NVTA endorsement of their Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant applications.
- ✓ She noted that the RAISE Discretionary Grant Program enables the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to invest in road, rail, transit and port projects which have significant local and regional impact.
- ✓ Arlington County is seeking endorsement for its application for the Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) Wall Trail to construct a ten-foot-wide pedestrian and bicycle trail on the west side of Virginia Route 110.
- ✓ Prince William County is also seeking endorsement for its Old Bridge Road/Gordon Boulevard Intersection Improvements and the Prince William Parkway/Minnieville Rd. Intersection Improvements.
- ✓ Lastly, the VRE is also seeking endorsement for its application for the L'Enfant Station and Fourth Track. This is a project which will add a mainline track between Virginia and L'Enfant interlockings in Washington, DC.
- ✓ She noted that all three projects are currently in TransAction. The deadline to submit applications is July 12, 2021, at 5pm.
- ✓ Board Member Cristol moved Authority Endorsement of Arlington and Prince William Counties and the Virginia Railway Express' Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Applications; seconded by Chair Wheeler. Motion passed unanimously.

**Discussion/Information Items**

**12. Governance and Personnel Committee Report**

Chair Randall, Chair

- ✓ Chair Randall provided a brief update of the GPC meeting to Authority Members regarding the action to work with the Commonwealth's Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) to conduct a compensation and position description study for the Executive Director position.
- ✓ She noted that these efforts did not have much success so the next option is to obtain the services of a consultant through a Request for Proposal (RFP).
- ✓ Mr. Longhi explained further that the DHRM compensation data does not correlate with the position of NVTA's Executive Director. This is because similar positions at the State level are either set by legislation or by an independent body such as the Authority.
- ✓ For these same reasons, he added that the State Department could not perform the position description evaluation and also did not have any related contract for NVTA's use as a rider.
- ✓ Chair Randall summarized that the GPC gave direction to Mr. Longhi to prepare an RFP and return to the Committee with the results.

### **13. Transportation Planning Board's Visualize 2045 Update and Proposed Resolution for Alternate Build Scenario**

Ms. Backmon, Executive Director

- ✓ Ms. Backmon informed the Authority of a Resolution which was to be considered by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) at their June meeting to conduct an Alternate Build Scenario.
- ✓ She noted that the TPB is responsible for updating the National Capital Region's Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) called Visualize 2045 and also conducts the air quality conformity determination every four years.
- ✓ She added that the current Visualize 2045 which was adopted in November 2018, is set to expire in December 2022.
- ✓ As a result, the TPB has initiated an update to Visualize 2045 (Technical Inputs Solicitation adopted in December 2020), that requires a reduction in vehicle miles traveled and associated emissions in Visualize 2045, to achieve new interim Greenhouse Gas reduction goals and new climate resiliency goals. The TPB is scheduled to take action on the Resolution to approve the project submissions for inclusion in the Air Quality Conformity Analysis for the 2022 Update to Visualize 2045.
- ✓ She continued that the TPB received a request to conduct an Alternate Build Scenario for inclusion in the current Visualize 2045 update process.
- ✓ She noted that the deadline for approval of the conformity analyses for the Visualize 2045 update by the Federal Highway (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is December 2022. The Chair of the TPB sent a letter requesting an extension of the deadline.
- ✓ The Alternative Build resolution would require the TPB to undertake additional work activities, including an additional air quality conformity analysis, in parallel to the ongoing Visualize 2045 update work described previously.
- ✓ However, there are significant questions regarding the proposed Alternative Build Scenario impact on the deadline.
- ✓ Ms. Backmon pointed out that NVTA Staff have questions regarding the ability of these projects to advance if the request for extension from the FHWA and FTA is not approved by December 2022, since that could impact funding for regionally significant projects which have various sources of funding allocated to them and could trigger federal actions.
- ✓ Council Member Snyder added that he worked with TPB Transportation Director-Mr. Srikanth and Ms. Backmon to develop a draft pathway forward regarding the situation.
- ✓ Ms. Backmon added that some questions have been sent to Mr. Srikanth and he is in the process of responding to them as that will be helpful for the purposes of updating TransAction.
- ✓ Mr. Kolb noted his appreciation for Ms. Backmon and Council Member Snyder for bringing this to the Authority's attention to help all understand what the potential impacts of this situation could be.
- ✓ Chair Randall associated with those comments.
- ✓ Ms. Hynes commented on how complicated this situation is and noted that looking at potential issues which could arise in the region, she recommends a quick resolution to the matter.

- ✓ Mayor Rishell also commented about the Resolution noting that she appreciates the efforts of Ms. Backmon and Council Member Snyder in tackling this issue. She also noted concerns regarding the sole focus on reducing vehicle miles traveled as the solution to climate change as there are other climate related issues. She stated that this focus pits road projects against transit projects.
- ✓ Senator Boysko also expressed her appreciation of Ms. Backmon and Council Member Snyder's efforts and recommended that if the timeline could be brought forward, that would be better.
- ✓ Delegate Watts noted that the situation does pit road capacity projects against transit projects since road capacity is needed for the transit network. She also noted the need to address charging stations and the mobility-disadvantaged populations.
- ✓ Mayor Meyer noted that he is also a member of the TPB and recommended reviewing the TPB issue with a 20-30 years lens. Further noting the region must give serious consideration to the impact on the climate for all funding approved in the region.
- ✓ Delegate Roem also added that there needs to be a reduction in 'idling' involving traffic lights and vehicular accidents to improve the state of existing roads.
- ✓ Chair Randall associated herself with those comments.
- ✓ Supervisor Foust stated that transportation planning and investments must recognize the impact on climate change.
- ✓ Mayor Wilson voiced that jurisdictions should be providing their input to their TPB representatives.
- ✓ Board Member Cristol affirmed her confidence in the efforts of Council Member Snyder stating that the status quo for transportation and housing planning needs to be looked at again, but she is also of the view that this discussion should be done at the jurisdictional level.
- ✓ Chair Wheeler noted her appreciation for all the efforts adding that funding should be spent on expanding electrification infrastructure.
- ✓ Ms. Sinner informed everyone that the Commonwealth will be sending a letter to the TPB, addressing Visualize 2045 and the 2022 deadline as this affects day-to-day State operations.
- ✓ Chair Randall noted that she respectfully disagrees with comments from Mayor Wilson and Board Member Cristol regarding discussing the TPB issue solely at the jurisdictional level, as the TPB's actions will impact every individual jurisdiction as well as the region.
- ✓ She also emphasized the need to be careful of this initiative considering the potential of putting transit projects against road projects.
- ✓ She stressed the need to be future oriented and the need to have fewer cars being combustion based and more being electric.

- ✓ Chair Randall thanked Council Member Snyder for drafting the plan regarding the proposed pathway forward. She also recommended that Authority Members discuss the proposed plan with their TPB members.
- ✓ Council Member Snyder noted his appreciation for the positive discussion as it would help the Authority move faster in the needed direction.
- ✓ He added that the TPB plan is better than previous ones but ultimately falls short on climate change and this is a major issue.
- ✓ He further added that the TPB is scheduled to meet next week and encourages all Members to discuss with their representatives.

**14. Executive Director's Report**

Ms. Backmon, Executive Director

- ✓ Ms. Backmon reminded everyone that next week Friday is 'NVTA Day' at the Town of Hillsboro as they celebrate the re-opening of Route 9.

**15. Chair's Comments**

- ✓ Chair Randall encouraged Members to plan to join in the Town of Hillsboro celebration.
- ✓ She also congratulated Mayor Wilson for winning the mayoral primary in his jurisdiction.

**16. Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:55pm.

**Next Meeting: July 8, 2021 at 7:00pm**  
NVTA Offices