

**APPROVED:** March 26, 2025.

## **PLANNING COORDINATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, January 22, 2025

6:30 p.m. EST

2600 Park Tower Drive, Suite 601

Vienna, VA 22180

*This meeting will be held in person and livestreamed via YouTube.*

## **MEETING SUMMARY**

### **I. Call to Order/Welcome**

- Mayor Colbert (Town of Vienna), Chair of the Committee, welcomed Committee members and called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m.
- Attendees:
  - **PCAC Members:** In-person - Mayor Colbert (Chair, Town of Vienna); Board Member Spain (Arlington County); Supervisor Walkinshaw (Fairfax County); Council Member Peterson (City of Fairfax). Virtual - Council Member Underhill (City of Falls Church).
  - **NVTA Staff:** Monica Backmon (Chief Executive Officer); Michael Longhi (Chief Financial Officer); Keith Jasper (Principal, Transportation Planning and Programming); Dr. Nampoothiri (Senior Manager).
  - **Other:** Sara Allred (Fairfax County).

### **II. Action Items:**

#### **A. Summary Notes of November 20, 2024, meeting.**

#### **B. 2025 Meeting Calendar.**

Without a quorum, there were no votes taken for the above two items, and they were deferred to the next meeting.

#### **C. Policy 30 Update and Recommendation:**

- Although there was no quorum for item II.C, individual PCAC members provided their feedback.
- Mr. Longhi provided a brief overview of the 2015-16 initiatives to set up a contingency fund for project cost underestimates and overruns. An advisory panel was formed by the then Executive Director to advise on this issue. This panel identified forty-seven issues to address before a contingency fund could

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be established, the primary concern was that such a step would shift project risk from project sponsors to the NVTa. In the November 14, 2024, Authority meeting, members discussed the following three options:

- A. Funding Cost Underestimates/Overruns/Transfers.
- B. Not Funding Cost Underestimates/Overruns/Transfers.
- C. Not Funding Cost Underestimates/Overruns/Transfers, with a petition option.

If option A is to be considered, the previously identified forty-seven issues need to be addressed, with a potential need to expand staff resources. In option C, there is a high bar for a petition to be submitted, citing unique and extraordinary circumstances, which are to be evaluated in the context of a Six Year Program evaluation process. After the discussion, members directed staff to draft a policy based on option C above.

- At previous NVTa statutory and standing committee meetings, the policy discussion revolved around various scenarios in which a petition can be justified. To avoid setting up any parameter expectations, it was decided to not further discuss any and all possible scenarios. Mr. Longhi then highlighted the features of the draft policy for consideration:
  - In the General section, a set of rationales are presented to not fund cost underestimates/overruns, and allow fund transfers between projects. For example, such step shifts project risks to the NVTa from the project sponsor, and any such transfer of risks by individual project sponsors is incompatible with the regional role of the Authority to increase transportation capacity and reduce congestion.
  - In the Petition for Policy Exemption section, the first point states that project sponsor petitions for policy exemptions are not encouraged. This is followed by other requirements and processes to submit a petition, and how it will be processed by NVTa staff and committees.
- Following this discussion, committee members sought a few clarifications, and provided comments:
  - *(Supervisor Walkinshaw) Shared his support to recommend the draft policy to Authority, and asked to clarify the distinction between a change in project characteristics, and cost overruns. How are fully funded projects considered during evaluation?* If there is a substantial change in project scope, for example designing new traffic signals instead of a roundabout (City of Fairfax project at Chain Bridge Rd/Eaton Pl. intersection), the funding consideration may need to be re-evaluated. In the qualitative criteria for project evaluation, a fully funded project is in a position of advantage.

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- (Board Member Spain) Shared his support for the proposed draft policy. Because the alternative options may jeopardize NVTAs's capability to deliver new and continuing projects.

- (Council Member Peterson) What happens if a new project cost estimate is lower than when it was approved, is there any penalty? In that situation, there is no penalty, and any additional funds will be returned to the regional fund. In response to this question, NVTAs provided an explanation of its project fund appropriation process, particularly focus how NVTAs's investment portfolio can support forward appropriation.

### **III. Discussion/Information Items:**

A. **CY 2025 Transportation Planning and Programming Activities:** Mr. Jasper provided a verbal update on upcoming planning and funding activities at NVTAs:

- The next update of NVTAs's long range transportation plan TransAction is to be completed by December 2027. The procurement activity will start this year, in which there may not be any discussion items for this committee in 2025.

- The Call for Regional Transportation Projects as a part of the next cycle of Six Year Program update will be in May, subject to the Authority's approval. The main application submission will be between May and July, with project evaluation starting in the fall.

- NVTAs's Preliminary Deployment Plan for Bus Rapid Transit (PDP-BRT) initiative is in the analysis phase now, with public engagement planned for spring, during which time NVTAs staff will provide updates to PCAC members. Authority action on the PDP-BRT is anticipated in July 2025.

- In the area of Transportation Technology, staff is working to re-start the activities of the Transportation Technology Committee, organizing the annual transportation roundtable event, and support various efforts related to the Regional Multimodal Mobility Program (RM3P) in conjunction with VDOT and DRPT.

B. **NVTAs Update:** Ms. Backmon mentioned NVTAs's recent initiatives for organizational branding with a new logo, the Annual Report, and upcoming TransAction update activities in this calendar year. She also shared funding decision results from the Commonwealth's SMART SCALE program's latest cycle.

**IV. Adjourn:** Without an approved yearly calendar, the next meeting of the PCAC is not scheduled, and will be determined as needed.

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The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.