



Northern Virginia Transportation Authority
The Authority for Transportation in Northern Virginia

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION WORKING GROUP

Monday, October 2, 2014, 10:00 am
Fairfax Department of Transportation
4050 Legato Road, Suite 400
Fairfax, Virginia 22033

SUMMARY NOTES

I. Call to Order/Welcome

Chairman Nohe

- Chairman Nohe called the meeting to order at 10:10 am.
- Attendees:
 - **PIWG Members:** Chairman Nohe; Vice Chairman Garczynski; Board Member Hynes (Arlington County); Council Member Rishell (City of Manassas Park); Sandra Bushue (NVTA Governor's Appointee); Tom Rust (Virginia House of Delegates); Rick Canizales, James Davenport (Prince William County); Karyn Moreland, Noelle Dominguez, Ron Kirkpatrick (Fairfax County); Bob Brown, Penny Newquist (Loudoun County); Sarah Crawford (Arlington County); Jim Maslanka (City of Alexandria); Wendy Block Sanford (City of Fairfax); Patrick Moore (City of Manassas); Helen Cuervo, Maria Sinner (VDOT); Claire Gron (NVTC); Doug Allen, Christine Hoeffner (VRE); Cynthia Porter-Johnson (PRTC); Allison Davis (WMATA); Rich Roisman (MWCOC/TPB); Richard West (Town of Dumfries); Mark Duceman (Town of Herndon); Calvin Grow (Town of Leesburg).
 - **NVTA Staff:** Monica Backmon (Executive Director); Mike Longhi (CFO); Keith Jasper (Program Coordinator).
 - **Other Staff:** Ellen Posner (Fairfax County); Steve MacIsaac (Arlington County); Angela Horan, Kimberly Bibbee (Prince William County).
 - **Other:** Nancy Hiteshue (Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance); David Dickson (Sierra Club NOVA); Rob Whitfield (Fairfax County Taxpayer Alliance).

II. Meeting Summary of August 18, 2014, Meeting

- Unanimously approved.

Discussion/Information

III. NVTA Update

Ms. Backmon

- Ms. Monica Backmon informed the group of the upcoming NVTa meeting at the City of Fairfax City Hall on October 9, 2014, at 7:00 pm, with a TransAction 2040 listening session preceding the meeting at 5:00 pm. She reminded the group that the PIWG will submit the 2-year program project selection criteria recommendations to the Authority on October 9, 2014.

IV. Finance Committee Report

Mr. Longhi

- Mr. Longhi reported that the 2014 bond issuance is proceeding on schedule; rating results will be received in about 2 weeks for review; and sales are still anticipated in November 2014.

V. Discussion of NVTa FY2015-16 Two Year Program

Mr. Jasper

- Mr. Keith Jasper provided a detailed overview of the feedback received from the Jurisdiction and Agency Coordinating Committee (JACC), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Planning Coordination Advisory Committee (PCAC) in response to the draft project selection criteria. Although the weightings are different for the quantitative portion of the evaluation, the scoring system that was used for TransAction 2040 is still in place. It was noted that future programs will use the approved project selection criteria as a starting point, but it is a living document.
- The group began discussing Slide 8, Ongoing FY2014 Projects, of the FY 2015-16 Program – Project Selection Criteria PowerPoint Presentation to the PCAC. They addressed the question if a project received funding in FY2014, should that project continue to receive funding in FY2015-16 if requested, and what level of obligation is there to continue the funding. Chairman Nohe pointed out that we are only building 2 years of a 6-year plan at this time. Since we fund projects in phases, having a longer timeframe of 6 years should take away the uncertainty of whether we can fund a project in its entirety. Ms. Backmon suggested the Authority continue to fund approved projects if the cash flow is available and given other unforeseen factors are taken under consideration. However, she would not recommend a policy requiring the NVTa to fund projects to completion.
- It was suggested that projects need to be prioritized within the selection process. Although there is an expectation to fund each phase of an approved project, it is conceivable that a project requiring multiple years of funding may not rate highly in the prioritization process and thus may not continue to be eligible for funding. Mr. Bob Brown added that a lot can change from planning, design and implementation of a project; actual cost can be difficult to predict. He suggested that the NVTa may want to consider funding the construction phase of the project and the locality is responsible for considering the worthiness of that project and ensuring it is completed to the construction phase. Ms. Hynes pointed out that smaller jurisdictions could be at a disadvantage without the funding for preliminary engineering in place.

- Chairman Nohe summarized that the fear is devoting money to a project that will never reach completion. Selecting a project implies the intention for that project to be realistically completed, but the NVTAs cannot be constrained to this expectation.
- Mr. Jasper continued with Slide 11, Preliminary Screening, the pass/fail component of the selection process. The group discussed the newly added criteria “Project is supported by a Comprehensive Plan.” This was included on the basis that if a project is not in a Comprehensive Plan now, then it will not be in a Comprehensive Plan for FY2015-16 funding. The group also discussed the question of whether the VRE System Plan sufficiently corresponds to a Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Hynes pointed out that governing boards of both agencies involved are made up of local elected officials; therefore, it can be acknowledged that the project is in a plan that has been regionally approved. Ms. Noelle Dominguez added that capital improvements already come with underlying operations components that jurisdictions must willingly support. Mr. Canizales agreed and pointed out that there are only three VRE members currently from the eight-member Board for Prince William County and all may not agree with having to fund additional VRE operations. It was added that if the project has been publicly vetted and approved by local officials, then the project is supported and worthy of consideration.
- Chairman Nohe pointed out that there are improvements of various types that are not big enough to be identified in a Comprehensive Plan. There could be scenarios where projects are appropriate for the NVTAs to consider but they are not included in the Comprehensive Plan. The group discussed how to best make these projects a priority.
- Many agreed that if a project is in a publicly vetted, officially reviewed document other than a Comprehensive Plan, this should be acknowledged. At a later date, the Authority can ultimately discuss any objections to the project if necessary. Chairman Nohe suggested taking the Comprehensive Plan criteria beyond a binary question of “yes” versus “no.” He expressed concern that a “no” could imply that a project came from nowhere of significance, while a “yes” may not fully represent a jurisdiction’s perspective on the project. He suggested sorting projects into three categories: “C” for Comprehensive Plan; “R” for Regional Plan; or “N” for no plan.
- After further discussion, Ms. Backmon and Mr. Canizales suggested removing the Comprehensive Plan requirement from the preliminary screening. Upon further review of this suggestion by the group, Chairman Nohe confirmed that the PIWG will remove the Comprehensive Plan from the preliminary screening criteria.
- In response to questions regarding the use of the word “TIP,” Mr. Canizales explained that the TIP is within the first 6 years of the CLRP; the CLRP is the foundation for the 2040 plan. Chairman Nohe further suggested that the reference to the CLRP and the TIP in this slide is redundant: if the project is in the TIP it is in the CLRP; if the project is in the 2010 CLRP, it is in TransAction 2040.
- Mr. Jasper directed the group to Slide 16: Quantitative scoring methodology. The group addressed the question of whether to change the weightings, how quickly a project can be implemented and how to define “implemented.” Mr. Brown explained that a lot of changes can occur in the span of 6 years. He suggested that “project can be implemented in the near term (less than 6 years)” should be revised to say “less than 2 years” for a High rating. Chairman Nohe noted that the construction phase is generally 2 years for a highway project. Mr. Jasper explained that the first part of

readiness refers to the phase of the project (e.g., a project in the study phase would score less than a project in the construction phase). While the second part of readiness is whether the project is ready to be implemented (i.e., the functional intent of the project is there). Chairman Nohe suggested clearly defining phase implementation versus total project completion. He pointed out that we cannot use the word “implementation” without any modifiers (e.g., project-phase implementation).

- After further discussion regarding the importance of the phase of a project, Ms. Backmon noted that this is 2 years of our 6-year program and it is necessary to ensure priority is given to projects that are ready to be constructed. If construction is outside the 2-year program, the group is not suggesting that funding should not be allocated to that project. Chairman Nohe further emphasized the importance of ribbon-cutting ceremonies and publicly acknowledging completed projects. He stated that people want congestion relieved—not congestion-relief planning.
- Mr. Jasper continued with Slide 20: Quantitative Score (Connectivity), and the newly added 5-point criteria under connectivity: “Project improves connections within Activity Centers.” The group looked to define the size range of an Activity Center. Ms. Hynes explained that COG’s regional plan identifies 140+ activity centers drawn from each jurisdiction’s comprehensive plan and range from small (e.g., Ballston) to large (e.g., City of Manassas).
- Chairman Nohe noted there are many improvements that can be made within jurisdictions that improve the entire region; but cross-jurisdictional projects (e.g., every metro project, VRE) should be encouraged. He expressed concern that the language “Within Activity Center” could allow for localities to ask for funding for their local projects because they fall within the activity center. Mr. Jasper pointed out that Slide 21: Quantitative Score (Bike/Ped) does focus more directly on an integrated multimodal system and there seems to be an overlap in that “within activity centers” may be covered under the 5-point criteria “Project supports multiple use development patterns in a walkable environment.” He suggested that if highway projects are connecting a jurisdictional boundary they could score highly.
- Ms. Hynes stated that all the modes have to work within an activity center (e.g., bike/ped, how road operates, signals) and suggested giving points to projects with multimodal components. This might encourage consideration for bike/walk trails that otherwise would not have been considered. Thus, the project scores highly if it is both cross-jurisdictional and has multimodal components. The group responded positively to this suggestion and agreed to the following scale:
 - 5 points (100 pts) if the project is inter-jurisdictional and multimodal
 - 2.5 points (66 pts) if the project if inter-jurisdictional (1 mode only)
 - 0 points (33 pts) if not inter-jurisdictional
- Mr. Jasper continued with Slide 23 Quantitative Score (Cost Sharing), the goal of identifying funding and legislative initiatives needed to implement the Plan. Mr. Jasper emphasized the need to document how NVT A money is leveraged and the need to be transparent about how this affects evaluation of the project. Ms. Hynes questioned the level of certainty required by the NVT A for funding. Mr. Canizales responded that this same criteria is present on the Qualitative criteria for this reason; if the money is not yet leveraged, this factor can be reassessed in the Qualitative

evaluation. Ms. Backmon added that, under the Authority Standard Project Agreement, jurisdictions must provide the documentation showing the needed funds are in place for the project, otherwise that Standard Project Agreement will not be recommended for approval by the Authority.

- Chairman Nohe ask the group if they were willing to move forward with a recommendation to the Authority for the project selection criteria with the agreed upon changes made throughout the meeting. The group unanimously agreed to recommend approval of the draft criteria for project selection.

VI. Draft Policy for addressing delayed NVTA-funded projects

- Ms. Backmon informed the group of a draft policy framework for addressing NVTA-funded projects that are not advancing. She emphasized the need to ensure the NVTA-approved projects have a standard project agreement and the project advances per the project scope of work. She highlighted the different scenarios that could delay a project included within the draft policy and explained that all scenarios included the need for NVTA approval of the action. She informed the group that this is a draft item that will be further discussed at subsequent PIWG meetings, before recommending action by the Authority.

VII. Draft Policy for managing unallocated FY2014 funding

- Ms. Backmon informed the group of a draft policy to allocate leftover FY2014 regional funds, due to a request made by a locality to use money to advance projects not yet submitted for consideration. Although Ms. Backmon does not recommend moving forward with this policy, she emphasized that if the Authority does want to move forward with the policy, an independent process to allocate the remaining FY2014 funds should be implemented so that the 2-year program is not derailed. Chairman Nohe also expressed his concern in considering this policy. He reminded the group that last year 33 projects were approved; however, projects 34, 35 and 36 did not get approved, because they did not meet the requirements. If we recommend moving forward with this policy and allow a new call for projects, we must consider whether we are unreasonably disadvantaging a good project that has already been submitted to the benefit of a project that was not subjected to a higher level of review. The group further questioned why these projects were not submitted in a timely manner and the group unanimously recommended not going forward with the proposed policy.

VIII. Other Business

- None.

IX. Next Meeting

- The next PIWG meeting will be held on November 17, 10:00 am.

Adjournment

X. Adjourn

- The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.