



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

**PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION WORKING GROUP**

**Thursday, January 15, 2015, 9:30 am**

**Northern Virginia Transportation Authority**

**3040 Williams Drive, Suite 200**

**Fairfax, Virginia 22031**

**SUMMARY NOTES**

**I. Call to Order/Welcome**

Chairman Nohe

- Chairman Nohe called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.
- Attendees:
  - **PIWG Members:** Chairman Nohe; Vice Chairman Garczynski; Board Member Hynes (Arlington County); Council Member Banks (City of Manassas Park); Sandra Bushue (NVTA Governor's Appointee); Chairman Bulova (Fairfax County); Chairman York (Loudoun County); James Davenport (Prince William County); Tom Biesiadny, Karyn Moreland (Fairfax County); Bob Brown (Loudoun County); Sarah Crawford (Arlington County); Pierre Holloman (City of Alexandria); Wendy Block Sanford (City of Fairfax); Paul Stoddard (City of Falls Church); Patrick Moore (City of Manassas); Rene'e Hamilton, Maria Sinner, Valerie Pardo, Norman Whittaker, Bob Josef (VDOT); Kate Mattice (NVTC); Christine Hoeffner (VRE); Cynthia Porter-Johnson (PRTC); Allison Davis (WMATA); Rich Roisman (MWCOG/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); Peggy Teal, Keith Jasper (Program Coordinator).
  - **Other Staff:** Ellen Posner (Fairfax County); Steve MacIsaac (Arlington County); Angela Horan, Kimberly Bibbee (Prince William County).
  - **Other:** David Roden, Krisha Patnam (AECOM); Denise Nugent, Tania Cunha (Travesky & Associates); Nancy Hiteshue (Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance).

**II. Meeting Summary of October 2, 2014, Meeting**

- Unanimously approved.

**Discussion/Information**

**III. NVTA Update**

Ms. Backmon

- Ms. Backmon informed the group that 26 SPAs had been approved from the FY2014 approved projects and six were outstanding. The goal is to get the outstanding six SPAs approved by the time the FY2015-16 Two Year Program is approved (currently scheduled for April 2015.)
- VDOT will be presenting the findings of the HB599 Rating and Evaluation Study to the Authority on January 22, 2015. Plans are underway to conduct a test of a few transit projects in order to validate the use of the TRANSIMS model for evaluating transit projects as part of the HB599 process.
- Ms. Backmon noted the Authority's meeting schedule for CY2015 meant that monthly meetings would start at 6:00 pm, Ms. Hynes indicated that this schedule may cause meeting conflicts with Arlington County's budget hearings in February and March. Chairman Nohe asked PIWG members to provide their jurisdictions' budget approval schedule.

**IV. Finance Committee Report**

Mr. Longhi

- Mr. Longhi reported that revenue estimates for FY2015-16 remain on track. The Finance Committee will be meeting on February 16, 2015.

**V. TransAction 2040 Update/Amendment Discussion**

Ms. Backmon

- The planned update is critical because the current long range transportation plan (TransAction 2040) was adopted in 2012, before HB2313 revenues were established in July 2013. In addition the plan must be updated to maintain the established process of updates every five years, ensuring the plan reflects changing circumstances and remains as current as possible.
- Ms. Backmon addressed the previously distributed chart comparing the overview of schedules for the update to TransAction 2040 with and without a parallel amendment. The update is expected to be adopted in time for a funding program (possibly a full six year program) starting in FY2018 at the earliest. This means consideration must be given to a funding program covering FY2017 as a minimum. The amendment would provide an opportunity for jurisdictions and agencies that do not have projects in TransAction 2040 to propose projects for funding consideration in FY2017. Proceeding with the update but without an amendment would mean that only projects already included in TransAction 2040 could be funded in FY2017.
- In addition to meeting the TransAction 2040 eligibility requirements, Ms. Backmon noted that it was the Authority's intent to only fund projects that had been rated by the HB599 process, commencing with the next call for projects that would be announced later in CY2015. This would include highway and mass transit projects.

- Ms. Backmon noted that there are a number of challenges associated with an amendment. It would cost approximately \$300,000, which has not been budgeted. From a technical perspective, there is uncertainty as which version of the region's CLRP would be the appropriate basis – 2010 would provide consistency with TransAction 2040, but is now out of date. There is concern that a call for projects may represent a significant capacity increase over TransAction 2040. Large new projects such as I-66 would potentially undermine the validity of previous analyses to the extent that the amendment should be treated as an update anyway.
- Ms. Hamilton confirmed that the scale of VDOT's current proposal to add capacity to I-66 is sufficiently large to justify it be included in an update rather than an amendment. She anticipated that the project would have significant impacts on travel patterns in Northern Virginia, although, as Mr. Nohe noted, there are some I-66 interchange improvements in TransAction 2040.
- Ms. Backmon recommended that the Authority continue with the planned update but without an amendment. Rather than proceed with an FY2017-19 funding program, Ms. Backmon recommended an FY2017 One Year Program, followed by a full FY2018-23 Six Year Program when the TransAction update is completed.
- Ms. Backmon emphasized the importance of having a program consistent with the CTB 6-year program and to have an annual call for projects similar to the CTB process.
- Ms. Hynes clarified that the purpose of the amendment was to allow the opportunity to consider new projects that are not in TransAction 2040.
- Mr. Brown noted that the original concern for Loudoun County is that it would be shut out of the opportunity to request funding for projects until FY2020 if the FY2015-16 Program was followed by a FY2017-19 Program. While noting that Ms. Hynes suggestion would allow greater flexibility, Ms. Backmon's recommendation was satisfactory, particularly if the update process provided the future opportunity for mid-cycle amendments.
- Ms. Bushue noted that TransAction 2040 was completed before HB2313 revenues were available, and therefore a full update to the plan is essential.
- Chairman Nohe agreed that the update approach should embed the ability to make a mid-cycle amendment to reflect changes to changing circumstances, e.g. Comprehensive Plans, elections, funding, etc.
- Ms. Hoeffner noted that VRE has ineligible projects and supported an update with an amendment option.
- In response to a question from Chairman Bulova, Chairman York confirmed that Ms. Backmon's recommendation is acceptable to Loudoun County.
- Ms. Backmon reminded the group that a call for projects does not equate to NVTAF funding of projects; while helping to advance projects is important, not every project can be funded.

## **VI. Draft Policy for addressing delayed NVTAF-funded projects**

- Ms. Backmon informed the group that the draft policy for addressing the delay of NVTA projects will be on the agenda for the next PIWG meeting. She noted that the numbers component needs to be included in the policy and the goal is to not only get the projects approved by the Authority but to also approve SPAs, ensure projects are advancing, and address in the policy how to handle issues that may arise. The goal is to have this policy approved prior to the approval of the Two Year Program.

## **VII. Presentation of HB599 Evaluation and Rating Study Results**

- Mr. Roden presented the results of the selection process and explained how performance measures were weighted and how adjustments were made. The project total scores were reviewed. Mr. Roden noted that the larger projects get the higher total congestion reduction scores.
- The 2040 results were discussed. Mr. Roden pointed out that projects score better or worse in 2040 depending on whether the congestion overwhelms the project and other factors such as significant growth in the region. A comparison of the project ratings in 2020 and 2040 was also reviewed.
- It was explained that transit projects were not considered for this analysis but the intent is to apply the same process to evaluate transit projects in the future.
- In response to question regarding whether a May call for projects (for the next cycle of projects) will be possible, Ms. Backmon explained that, ideally, the NVTA will provide comments and concerns to VDOT prior to the call for projects. The call for projects is expected to occur no later than fall 2015. Final ratings with any necessary adjustments will be presented at the January 22 Authority meeting, with submission of the final report in February 2015.
- Ms. Hamilton emphasized that the law requires HB599 to measure congestion relief. Ms. Bulova noted that while HB599 only looks at congestion, NVTA's funding decisions will be based on congestion relief and other criteria. Ms. Hynes asked whether we have a plan to communicate this with our legislators. Chairman Nohe agreed we should come up with a plan to describe the Authority's process.
- Ms. Hynes emphasized that certain kinds of projects by their nature will get higher scores. How transit projects are evaluated and what the data means will need to be clearly defined so that the end result is helpful to the region. Ms. Backmon echoed that we need to ensure there is a fair comparison when including transit projects in the evaluation process, which is why a test evaluation of a transit project is currently being planned.
- Chairman Nohe suggested that there will be a need to change the project selection model and the NVTA transportation calculations need to be adjusted for a fair comparison. Also, he suggested the group look for ways to include the data in TransAction 2040 updates so that every project is rated fairly. He recommended finding ways of collecting the data for all projects and embedding the HB599 process

in the TransAction update so that all projects are rated with similar data simultaneously rather than requiring months of separate, additional analysis.

**VIII. Draft NVTA FY2015-16 Two Year Program** Mr. Jasper

- Mr. Jasper provided an overview of the Draft FY2015-16 Two Year Program to the group. He emphasized the importance of voicing initial responses and feedback to the results but he stated that a final recommendation to the NVTA will not be made at the upcoming January NVTA meeting. Inputs on project selection will also be invited from the TAC, JACC, and PCAC during January and February.
- Mr. Jasper explained that the report consists of 52 projects that are sorted into three groups: the 27 initially recommended projects are highlighted in green; the 9 projects highlighted in red are not recommended; and 16 projects are neither highlighted red nor green (white) but are identified as requiring further consideration.
- NVTA approval will be requested at the February meeting to release the draft program for public hearing to be held in March.
- After addressing feedback from this hearing and any other concerns, a final recommendation will be submitted to the NVTA in April 2015.
- Mr. Jasper noted that only the HB599 2040 ratings are being used in the analysis because, while not directly an “apples to apples” comparison, it provides some consistency in rating highway and transit projects. He also noted that the HB599 ratings were calculated under the assumption that the projects have already been completed.
- In reviewing Table 4, Mr. Jasper pointed out that the top three projects scored by NVTA are the same three projects that scored the highest for HB599. The top-rated transit project scored an 88.3 and the top-rated highway project has a score of 74; many of the transit projects outscore the highway projects because of the necessarily different approach for the congestion reduction criterion. There is a 20-point range to compare recommended transit and highway projects.
- Mr. Jasper acknowledged that the Project 27 (Herndon, East Elden Street) score needs a slight upward adjustment but this does not change the recommendation.
- Two highway projects highlighted in red (Prince William Route 15 widening and the Purcellville Main Street and Maple Avenue intersection improvements) are eligible for funding but are not recommended for further consideration. Neither project scored well in HB599 congestion relief. The cost of \$96 million for the Prince William Route 15 project means congestion relief relative to cost is very low. The other five projects highlighted in red are ineligible because they are not included in TransAction 2040.
- It was noted that clearly defining the phase of the project within the table would be helpful.
- It was recommended that the phase of the project and the jurisdiction’s expectation for the funding of the project be fully understood. Ms. Backmon reminded the group that a policy was avoided regarding this because it could constrain the NVTA to

continue to fund a project possibly from study to construction, which could span years and many millions of dollars. She reminded the group that building in some flexibility is necessary so the PIWG can make a recommendation based on the project's phase.

- It was noted that the Authority cannot fund highway projects that do not have an HB599 rating. Projects could be ineligible (highlighted red) because they did not pass the preliminary screening, i.e. inclusion in TransAction 2040.
- Mr. Jasper explained that the projects categorized in white, under further consideration, are retained on the list because they may be considered worthy of funding based on qualitative considerations at a later time. Chairman Nohe emphasized that, when the Authority authorizes advertisement of the March Hearing on the Two Year Program, it is important to include both the recommended projects and projects under consideration (green and white) on the advertisement so that citizens have the opportunity to voice their opinions regarding projects they find most worthy. He acknowledged that the red projects can be omitted from the advertisement since they are ineligible.
- For modal balance, Ms. Hynes suggested that the share of total funding associated with transit projects should be higher. She also indicated that Arlington County may resubmit one FY2015-16 funding request to include just design and not construction.
- Mr. Davenport recommended removal of “no further funding request” in Appendix B under the notes section of two Prince William County projects listed under FY2015-16 due to rising costs of right of way acquisition and utility relocation.
- Mr. Brown asked how we would address a situation where an ineligible project that has been rated by HB599 is resubmitted in response to a future call for projects. Would the project need to be re-rated by HB599?
- It was noted that transparency in how the data is collected throughout the evaluation process and public accessibility to this information is an important consideration.
- The Public Hearing was scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, 2015, at 6:00 p.m., subject to Authority approval, with possible snow dates of March 31 and April 1, 2015.

## **Adjournment**

### **IX. Adjourn**

- The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.
- The next PIWG meeting was scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on Friday, February 13, 2015 at NVTA