



# Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

*The Authority for Transportation in Northern Virginia*

## PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE

Monday, October 4, 2021, 5:00 p.m.

Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

### SUMMARY NOTES

#### I. Call to Order/Welcome

- Chairman Wilson called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.
- Attendees:
  - **PPC Members:** Mayor Wilson (City of Alexandria); Council Member Snyder (City of Falls Church); Mayor Rishell (City of Manassas Park); Chair Wheeler (Prince William County).
  - **Other NVTA Members:** None.
  - **NVTA Staff:** Monica Backmon (CEO); Keith Jasper (Principal); Sree Nampoothiri (Senior Transportation Planner).
  - **Jurisdiction/Agency Staff:** Proceedings were livestreamed on YouTube Live.
  - **Others:** Dalia Leven (Cambridge Systematics).

### Action

#### II. Summary Notes of July 12, 2021, Meeting

- The July 12, 2021, Planning and Programming Committee meeting summary was approved unanimously.

### Discussion/Information

#### III. TransAction: Public Engagement Activities

- Mr. Jasper updated the Committee on various public engagement activities carried out and ongoing regarding the TransAction update. Activities included online survey, focus group meetings, live chat sessions, pop-up events, etc.
- Online survey conducted in English, Spanish, and Korean received more than 2300 responses from Northern Virginia jurisdictions and surrounding localities including from District of Columbia, Maryland, and other counties in Virginia. Detailed survey results are being analyzed.
- In-person pop-up events were held at locations where we could reach out to equity population to encourage participation. In response to Mayor Rishell's question on the criteria to select certain languages to be supported at the pop-up events, Mr. Jasper noted that the languages were selected by most languages other than English spoken in the nearby areas and people frequented the locations several of which were ethnic shopping areas.

- Four live chat sessions were held by NVTA staff via TransAction website on an experimental basis.
- A stakeholder group is being finalized to communicate with organizations representing citizens and businesses to amplify NVTA’s messaging and get feedback on NVTA activities. The group includes organizations such as civic groups, advocacy groups, chambers of commerce, etc. First meeting with the stakeholder group is being planned for end of October 2021.
- In response to Mayor Wilson’s question on providing group contacts to the NVTA staff, Mr. Jasper encouraged members to provide details of any groups they are aware of and interested to be part of.
- Eight focus groups totaling 95 participants from a combination of segments such as geographic, equity population, people with and without transit access, age groups, gender, etc. were conducted. Discussion topics included current and future travel trends, core values, priorities, transportation improvements, and emerging travel options. The discussions tried to explore not only their choices but the reasons behind their choices. Main findings from the discussions included:
  - Single occupancy vehicles were chosen as preferred mode for their reliability and flexibility.
  - People without access to transit were willing to explore public transportation if available and understood better.
  - High housing prices near metro stations were pointed out as a concern.
  - The core value of ‘equity’ was understood as fairness; ‘sustainability’ as maintenance of infrastructure rather than the environmental concerns; and ‘safety’ as safety from accidents as well as from crimes.
  - Highest priority across the board was reducing congestion while those without Metro access gave priority to expanding transportation choices.
  - Building new/widened roads was the primary improvements people chose.
  - The range, availability of charging stations, and price of vehicles were the main concerns noted regarding electric vehicle adoption.
- Council Member Snyder noted that the people may consider priority based on what mode they use in short-term and need to explore further to make people think about medium- and long-term needs/priorities.

#### **IV. TransAction: Goals, Objectives, Measures**

- Mr. Jasper noted that the Committee is expected to continue discussion of this topic and take action to recommend goals, objectives, and measures to the Authority only at the next meeting. Ms. Leven added that the Committee will need to act on weights after the November Authority meeting.
- Ms. Leven walked the Committee through the approved vision as well as the core values of equity, sustainability, and safety. She noted the feedback received from various committees and how the staff incorporated them. The rationale for feedback being not incorporated were also presented. She noted the revised wording for goals and objectives based on the feedbacks.

- Council Member Snyder requested to add alignment of the goals/objectives with the core values, particularly to the core value of sustainability.
- In response to Mayor Wilson’s question on the need for stratifying Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) by speed, Ms. Leven noted that the level and type of emissions depend on speed of vehicles.
- Council Member Snyder opined that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions need to be included in the analysis. He encouraged to investigate ways to meet the GHG goals for the region. Chair Wheeler reminded that while it is a great goal, that is not the only priority for NVTa. She added that as per enabling legislation, reducing congestion is the primary objective for NVTa and other priorities can be considered as parts of the other priorities.
- Council Member Snyder encouraged to think beyond the urban and suburban/rural differences about VMT. Mayor Wilson encouraged to think about ways other than VMT too to measure emissions. Chair Wheeler agreed and noted that there is a negative connotation with VMT though it may not be bad depending on the situation. Ms. Leven noted that VMT is being considered as a proxy for emissions and not being used itself as a measure.
- In response to the discussion about the measure access to jobs, Ms. Leven elaborated that this measure is primarily looking at the access to jobs, but it is also a proxy on other type of trips since places like malls, and medical offices tend to be places with job concentrations too.
- Mayor Wilson wanted to see how “optionality” (multi-modal options for travelers during an emergency) can be considered as part of resiliency. Ms. Leven noted that that such modal redundancy can be captured but will be complex.

## **V. NVTa Update**

- Ms. Backmon noted that the next Authority meeting is scheduled for October 14, 2021. The Authority will receive a presentation from Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) on the progress of projects funded with I-66 Outside the Beltway Concessionaire funds. The Authority is also expected to issue call for projects for the FY2028 CMAQ/RSTP funds. She noted that the application deadline for the FY2022-2027 Six Year Program (SYP) was closed as of October 1, 2021. NVTa staff is reviewing them for completeness and eligibility. A TransAction Work Session for the Authority members is planned for October 28<sup>th</sup> where this discussion can continue among Authority members. The ribbon cutting for the W&OD dual trail project in City of Falls Church is scheduled for October 6<sup>th</sup>.

## **Adjournment**

## **VI. Adjourn**

- The next two meetings will be on November 1 and November 29. The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.