



Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

The Authority for Transportation in Northern Virginia

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE

Monday, October 3, 2022, 5:30 p.m.

Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

SUMMARY NOTES

I. Call to Order/Welcome

- Chairman Wilson called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.
- Attendees:
 - **PPC Members:** Mayor Wilson (City of Alexandria); Mayor Rishell (City of Manassas Park); Council Member Snyder (City of Falls Church); Chair Wheeler (Prince William County).
 - **NVTA Staff:** Monica Backmon (CEO); Keith Jasper (Principal); Sree Nampoothiri (Senior Transportation Planner)
 - **Jurisdiction/Agency Staff:** None
 - **Others:** Tom Harrington (Cambridge Systematics). Proceedings were livestreamed on YouTube Live.

Action

II. Summary Notes of June 23, 2022, Meeting

- The June 23, 2022, Planning and Programming Committee meeting summary was unanimously approved.

Discussion/Information

III. TransAction: Status Update

- Mr. Jasper presented the current schedule of TransAction update process.
- Dr. Nampoothiri briefed the Committee about the public engagement process with the comment period running from August 1st to September 18th with the Public Hearing on September 8th. The draft Plan Summary document and online comment form were made available in English, Spanish, and Korean. In addition, the draft Project List was provided in PDF format as well as sortable tabular format on the TransAction website. An interactive map was also provided for review. The opportunities to comment were publicized extensively.

- Dr. Nampoothiri informed that a total of 223 comments were received, mostly via online comment form. He added that though comments were received from across the region, a large number of comments came from inside the Beltway. The common themes heard were opposition to new/widening of roadways, concerns about the potential resulting increase in emissions, safety, and support for transit and bike-pedestrian projects especially the bus rapid transit (BRT) network.
- Dr. Nampoothiri added that about slightly less than half of the commenters agreed that the Plan will achieve the goals of mobility, accessibility, and resiliency. About half of the responders disagreed that the Plan reflect the core values of safety, equity, and sustainability.
- Mr. Jasper noted that the number of comments received were about one-third of what were received in the last cycle five years back though the effort to engage people were increased multifold. He pointed out that several other plans and programs had public comment periods around the same time and may have resulted in less interest this time, or possibly confusion.
- Mayor Rishell noted that people who are upset about something tend to comment more and so the low response may mean that many people are satisfied with the Plan.
- Chair Wheeler agreed with Mayor Rishell and noted that the comment opportunity was not a scientific survey that is structured to be representative and so the comments may be skewed.
- Mayor Wilson noted that the volume is less important, but we need to focus on the themes in the comments.
- In response to Mayor Wilson's question on the focus of comments in the last cycle, Mr. Jasper noted that it was varied. He added that last update to TransAction was the first update of the Plan after the Authority started receiving revenues and may have generated more interest at that time.
- Mr. Jasper briefed the Committee about the three scenarios analyzed including the assumptions behind each scenario. The comments received were mixed in terms of understanding of the scenarios and the impact of them. Mr. Jasper noted that this potentially points to the need for simplifying the language and better explaining the section on scenario analysis.
- Mr. Jasper noted the projects that were most commented on. The project that received the most comments was the Construct Van Buren North Road: Cardinal Drive to Dumfries Road with most of them opposing the project.
- Mr. Jasper informed the Committee that the staff and consultants are working on areas of enhancements based on the comments from the public and the committees and staff's own review. These include better communicating the scenario analysis and plan results, cleaning up the project list for duplicates and location, removing two projects that are already under construction, and correcting the end point of one project on the interactive map. Enhancement will also include providing key takeaways and state the fact that TransAction is fiscally and geographically unconstrained, and it is not a funding document.
- Council Member Snyder noted that NVTA's investment so far has achieved a lot and we need to think about the areas that still need improvement. He added that the NVTA has addressed a lot of backlog on road investment in the region and the future

could be on technology, including electrification. He also noted that the Plan may need to think where the region should be in the next five years including areas such as improving transit and bike-pedestrian infrastructure to reduce dependence on single occupied vehicles (SOV).

- Mr. Jasper noted that though the single largest mode of transportation funded with NVTA regional revenues is roadway projects, NVTA has funded various transit projects. In fact, the largest funding for a single project went to the Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit Project. Mr. Jasper added that TransAction provides the choices that people need to travel by modes other than driving. He added that the fact that NVTA receives funding requests that are typically double the available funds show that there still is a high need. He noted that there is a close connection between transportation and land use but several of the solutions may be on the land use side, which NVTA doesn't control. He added that the Plan update highlights BRT and supportive projects as well as technology projects.
- Mayor Wilson agreed that the impacts of investments can complement or cancel out each other. Land use can definitely complement the investments.
- Mr. Jasper drew attention to the emphasis provided for a regional BRT system in the Plan.
- Mayor Rishell noted that the region may always have a backlog of projects due to the continuing economic prosperity of the region, as well as population and employment growth, and the affordability of different sections of the population.
- Council Member Snyder stressed the importance to have complementary multimodal systems rather than the dichotomy of transit and auto and urged everyone to think about where the region should be in five years. Mr. Jasper reminded committee members that the Plan provides the options to reach a multimodal future, but the actual prioritization of projects happens through the Six Year Program (SYP) process. Ms. Backmon added that the system may look different for different parts of the region and TransAction provides choices for a seamless travel across the region.
- Chair Wheeler noted that the success may look different in different parts of the region. Mayor Rishell agreed and added that the need and aspirations of the residents will be reflected in the kind of projects jurisdictions undertake.
- In response to Council Member Snyder's request to clarify the terms No-Build and Build. Mr. Jasper noted that these refer to future transportation network with the No-Build network including what is on the ground now, projects that are already underway and those that are fully funded and can reasonably be expected to be completed by 2045; and Build network, which includes the 429 projects in the draft project list. Committee members suggested to clarify this differentiation in the Plan.

IV. NVTA Update

- Ms. Backmon reminded that the next Authority meeting is on October 13th and the agenda includes the draft legislative priorities that will focus on protecting the Authority's revenues. The Authority will also receive a presentation from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) on the status of the Transform I-66 Outside the Beltway Concessionaire-funded projects.

Adjournment

V. Adjourn

- The next meeting will be on November 21, 2022, at 5:00 p.m.
- The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

DRAFT