

Board Transportation Committee Meeting Summary December 13, 2016

Members in Attendance:

Supervisor John Foust, Chair
Chairman Sharon Bulova
Supervisor John Cook
Supervisor Penny Gross
Supervisor Pat Herrity
Supervisor Catherine Hudgins
Supervisor Jeff McKay
Supervisor Kathy Smith
Supervisor Linda Smyth
Supervisor Dan Storck

County Executive: Edward L. Long Jr. and Robert A. Stalzer (Deputy).

Supervisor Foust called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the October 4, 2016, meeting were accepted with no changes.

2. Discussion of Metro Safety Commission and Outlook for State Transit Funding

Jennifer Mitchell, Director, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), briefed the Board on the process toward creating the Metro Safety Commission (MSC) to oversee operations of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) took over the safety oversight of WMATA on September 2015. In February 2016, FTA noted that they would begin withholding up to 5% of Federal Urbanized Area funds to Virginia, District of Columbia and Maryland (VA-DC-MD) if the new MSC was not established by February 2, 2017. The impacted funds to Virginia are approximately \$6 million per year.

Since April 2015, the VA-DC-MD Policy Committee has been working on several policy issues regarding the legal structures and components of MSC. Based on the proposal developed, the MSC will be an independent legal entity that has full safety oversight of the WMATA Metrorail system and assumes all safety oversight responsibility from FTA once the MSC is in place. The proposed MSC is an interstate compact commission that has common instrumentality of the signatories from VA, DC and MD, and is financially and legally independent of WMATA. The MSC will be governed by a Board of Directors that includes six board members with three alternate members. The Board of Directors will appoint a Chief Executive Officer to lead the MSC staff and oversee day-to-day operations. The MSC may review and approve WMATA's safety plan; set

and update minimum safety standards for WMATA; require and enforce any corrective action plans that the MSC deems appropriate; compel compliance with MSC orders and standards; investigate any emerging rail safety concerns; conduct inspection of WMATA property; take primary responsibility for the investigation of accidents and prepare reports; audit WMATA's compliance with its own safety plan requirements, and other responsibilities. Funding for the MSC will come from FTA (approximately \$1.5 million per year in grants for State Safety Oversight activities) and equal shares from VA, DC and MD. Virginia's share is estimated at \$1-\$2 million per year. DRPT expects to fund the MSC through existing funding sources. The District of Columbia Council plans to approve legislation on December 20, 2016. In addition, Ms. Mitchell also stated that there is a need to support the full \$150 million Congressional annual appropriation to WMATA, as well as the reauthorization of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) by 2020.

Ms. Mitchell reviewed the FY 2017 Transit Revenues and Transportation Capital Project Revenue, current transit capital allocation process, and the forthcoming funding situation that DRPT will be facing. DRPT estimated that there will be a \$1 billion gap regarding state needs versus available revenues from FY 2018 to FY 2027. The annual deficit for the Transit Capital Program is estimated to be \$178 million by FY 2027. Reduced state matching will cause local shares to increase significantly and local governments will need to fill the gaps or make extensive service cuts.

Chairman Bulova inquired about the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) differences between federal government and states related to the MSC legislation. Ms. Mitchell replied that each state has slightly different FOIA variations as compared to federal FOIA requirements. Supervisor Herrity asked for a copy of the draft language that will be submitted to the General Assembly (similar to the legislation that DC Council plans to approve on December 20, 2016).

The Board asked questions about the opportunity for another bond sale and any issues with longer bond terms. Ms. Mitchell replied that only the Virginia General Assembly can approve the additional bonds; however, she stated that bonds are not an effective long-term funding solution. The issue with longer bond terms (30 years), is that funds are often fully utilized in the first 10-year period. Supervisor Hudgins thanked Ms. Mitchell for her presentation and stated the importance of having oversight over WMATA. Ms. Mitchell stated that DRPT is in support of long-term funding for WMATA and the need to have the safety commission legislation passed. Chairman Bulova stated that there is a misconception that Virginia is not willing to pay for Metro. She stated that Fairfax County has a commitment to Metro, but there is a need for changes in strategic safety issues and safety culture. Supervisor Herrity stated that the state needs to provide more funding, and has concerns about labor cost issues and Metro's inability to fire people. Ms. Mitchell stated that the terms in the collective bargain agreements prevent any labor shut down or strike, but there is a cost built in to that clause. The Board members agreed that there is a need for safety culture changes.

3. Update and Discussion of Atlantic Gateway Project

Susan Shaw, VDOT, briefed the Board on the Atlantic Gateway Project. Virginia was selected to receive a \$165 million federal grant to improve more than 50 miles of the I-95/I-395 corridor from Fredericksburg to the Pentagon. The project includes: extending I-95/I-395 Express Lanes, improving rail service on Virginia Railway Express and Amtrak, increasing capacity on I-95/I-395 general purpose lanes, and expanding bus service and commuter parking spaces in the corridor.

4. Update and Discussion of I-395 Express Lanes Project and Public Hearings

Ms. Shaw briefed the Board on the I-395 Express Lanes Northern Extension Project. The toll project will provide a long-term transit investment through an annual transit payment from toll revenues at least \$15 million, and escalated annually. The project will expand and convert the two existing reversible High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to three managed High Occupancy Toll (HOT) or Express Lanes to approximately eight miles from Edsall Road to the vicinity of Eads Street near the Pentagon. The Environmental Assessment (EA) findings found no substantial impacts. On average, the travel time reduction for commuters on I-395 will be from six to eight minutes or 15 percent.

DRPT is leading the development of a new I-95/I-395 Transit/Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Study in coordination with key stakeholders. The project study area extends from the southern terminus of I-95 Express Lanes (at Garrisonville Road) north to the Potomac River. The benefits of the project are to move more people, reduce congestion, expand travel choices, increase reliability, and improve safety and mitigate noise. There have been four public hearings to present findings of the draft EA, and ongoing technical coordination with localities. Public comments include noise walls, safety, toll rates, impact of construction, and specific intersections impacts, etc. The project will begin construction in 2017 with completion by 2019.

Supervisor McKay stated that he is fully supportive of the project, especially with the funding for the transit component. However, he strongly disagreed with the decision not to build full time Express Lanes in each direction. He stated the need to have the reversible lanes in both directions to be able to adapt and serve commuters' travel patterns. He stated that it is a long-term mistake and a major shortcoming based on old assumptions that do not reflect today's reality.

Supervisor Gross stated that she thinks Virginia has the ugliest sound walls in the nation and urged VDOT officials to make sound walls look more aesthetic with good landscaping like those in the nearby jurisdictions, particularly the sound walls on Route 50 heading toward Annapolis, MD, or the designs in Phoenix, AZ. Ms. Shaw replied that at the outreach meetings with the homeowners associations (HOAs), VDOT presented the design standards and samples of recent sound walls installed to the residents. The sound wall motifs are also available online. She also said that noise is not expected to increase, because of this project. Some communities do not want the sound walls installed. VDOT will work with the communities on this issue. Chairman Bulova shared

her experience on the bridge connecting Roberts Road to the Burke Centre VRE Station and that sound walls need to look more aesthetic. She stated that she is very supportive of the project. She inquired about the impact of building bi-directional Express Lanes. Ms. Shaw replied that the biggest impact would be infrastructure improvements, not right-of-way issues. It is very costly to reconstruct an interchange like the one at Shirlington Road. She stated that VDOT will take a high-level look at the issue for future consideration.

5. Update and Discussion of Commonwealth Transportation Board Actions on I-66 Express Lanes outside the Beltway

Ms. Shaw continued to brief the Board on the progress of Transform 66: Outside the Beltway. This project will provide multimodal improvements to 22.5 miles of the I-66 corridor that will include two Express Lanes in each direction from I-495 (Capital Beltway) to Gainesville (University Boulevard), three general purpose lanes in each direction, new transit service and park-and-ride lots, and safety and operational improvements at key interchanges. Some of the key policy considerations include: funding for transit as a requirement and no notice to proceed (NTP) for construction until the necessary permits are obtained. VDOT will provide up to \$600 million public contribution and the developer will finance the project at its own cost and risk. The total cost is estimated at \$2.3 billion. The project will provide required transit payments and support of corridor improvements, and will make a \$500 million concession fee payment to the Commonwealth. The other benefits to the Commonwealth include \$500 million for additional improvements to the I-66 corridor, \$300 million will return to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority for other key regional projects, and \$300 million will return to the High Priority Project Program in SMART SCALE for statewide competition. The project will begin construction in fall 2017 and an estimated completion date by August 2022.

Supervisor Herrity asked for the information on the technical innovation and sharing of the Alternative Technical Concepts (ATC). Ms. Shaw replied that some of the information is available on the website, but it is subject to change. She stated that there will be some changes in the next 60 to 90 days. Supervisor Smith asked for the timing of the interchange of I-66 at Route 28. Ms. Shaw replied that within 30 months of notice to proceed, the plan is to remove the signal lights off Route 28. Mr. Biesiadny stated staff are working on the list of possible projects to submit and will bring it to the Board for consideration.

Chairman Bulova asked about the projected revenues from trucks if they were allowed to use the Express Lanes. Ms. Shaw replied that the truck traffic in the region is estimated from three to eight percent of the total traffic. VDOT's model is for the general purpose lanes. If trucks were to be allowed in the Express Lanes, their toll rates would be a minimum of three times the regular toll during the non-peak periods and five times the regular toll during the peak periods. VDOT examined similar systems that allow trucks in Express Lanes and concluded that during the peak period, the truck traffic would be about one percent, and five percent for the non-peak periods. She stated that there are concerns about increased truck traffic and the designs at ramps to handle

trucks. Chairman Bulova expressed deep concerns about truck traffic on Express Lanes, especially on ramps that could lead to more problems and dangerous issues. She inquired about taking trucks out of the Express Lanes and Ms. Shaw replied that it would be a significant change. Supervisor Smyth agreed and shared her concerns about the problems at the Vaden Drive Ramp at Vienna Metrorail Station, and the conflicts with bicycle and pedestrian traffic. She emphasized that this is the last point on I-66 that trucks can get off the highway, or the first point that trucks can get on I-66. There are townhouses near the ramp. There is a need to study the noise and air quality issues. She stated that there was a request for a through-truck ban on Vaden Road. Ms. Shaw stated that VDOT is committed to working with the locality and meet all of the federal requirements.

6. Discussion of the Reston Transportation Funding Plan

Tom Biesiadny and Ken Kanownik, FCDOT, briefed the Board on the status of the Reston Transportation Funding Plan and funding scenarios. On October 4, 2016, the Board was briefed on the work being done to develop the Reston funding plan. The Reston Funding Plan projects are estimated to have a total cost of \$2.266 billion: \$1.2 billion for roadway improvements, \$44.6 million for intersection projects, and \$1.021 billion for the grid network. Contributions needed towards the private share (total grid and intersection improvements) and from other funding mechanisms are estimated at \$350 million. The Reston Network Advisory Group, which has been working with FCDOT in the development of the funding plan, is most interested in funding options that include both proffer (road fund) and service district revenue streams. The Advisory Group directed staff to pursue all further analysis on funding Scenarios 8, 10, and 11. At the meeting on November 21, 2016, the Advisory Group did not come to a consensus on a final rate scenario and requested additional time to allow the Reston Association Board to be briefed and discuss the funding plan. Staff proposed Scenario 12 that takes into account the ranges in Scenarios 8, 10, and 11, and applied additional refinements based on the feedback received. The rates for Scenario 12 are: \$0.021 per \$100 of assessed value for service district; \$2,090 per residential dwelling unit, and \$9.56 per square foot for commercial units. These funding scenarios will be discussed at the Reston Association Board meeting on December 15, 2016, and the Reston Advisory Group meeting on December 19, 2016. The next steps will be planning for community outreach, and the Board's approval for public hearings.

Supervisor Hudgins stated that the improvements in Reston will be impacted by this plan. She reminded the Board that there are communities outside of Reston which will be impacted by this plan as well. She stated that Reston needs these improvements as soon as possible, and there is no need to go beyond the timeframe. Supervisor Herrity asked for the cross-section of Soapstone Road and what can be done to reduce the cost, since it has doubled from the original cost estimate. Mr. Biesiadny replied that with the help of the consultant, staff have reduced the high-level cost estimate. The high-level cost estimate was based on the requirements of the Comprehensive Plan. As the project moves into the design phase, staff will be able to revise the cost. Supervisor Hudgins

stated that Soapstone Road is a major intersection and carries a lot of people. She reminded that Board about the infrastructure needs to serve the future demand.

7. Briefing on Herndon and Innovation Center Parking Garage Financing

Joe LaHait, DMB, briefed the Board on the funding and financial terms of the Fairfax County Parking Garages at the Herndon and Innovation Center Metrorail Stations. The project cost of the Herndon Station Garage is estimated at \$44.5 million with the occupancy date of May 2019. The project cost of the Innovation Center Station Garage is estimated at \$57.4 million with the occupancy date of May 2019. The County will receive 100 percent of the parking fee revenue (\$4.85 per day per parking space) from both garages which can be used for operation and maintenance, capital and debt service. Conservative projections indicate parking garages can be self-supporting. Fairfax County requested an outside parking garage consultant's review of financial assumptions. The consultant affirmed the County assumptions of 70 percent occupancy rate for County surcharge garage revenues, and agreed with County figures for operations and maintenance costs of \$2 million per year, plus two percent annual inflationary adjustment.

Due to the time constraint, the presentations of Update on Trail Maintenance and Lighting Project and Dulles Metrorail Silver Line Phase 2 Status were postponed to the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 12:10 pm. The next BTC meeting has not been scheduled yet.