

Commonwealth Transportation Board Rail Sub Committee

May 15, 2018

General Francis Marion Hotel
The Conference Room
107 East Main Street
Marion, Virginia

CTB-R Attendance: Secretary Valentine, Scott K., Mary Hynes, Stephen Johnsen, Jennifer Mitchell

Staff: Michael Todd, Jeremy Latimer, Michael McLaughlin

8:40am: Director Mitchell opened the meeting with approval of the minutes. Mary Hynes made a motion to approve, Stephen Johnsen seconded the motion. Unanimous approval. Mary Hynes requested that future minutes remain higher level in the detail they capture.

Director Mitchell gave updates on major capital projects underway:

- Acca Yard: CSX committed \$15M cash match. Acca Bypass, Universal Crossovers, and Double Track will improve fluidity for freight and secured three train slots for Virginia: two additional Norfolk trains from Richmond, and one slot across CSX territory for a second Lynchburg service. January 2019 completion – on track for an earlier completion, and possibly under budget.
- Staples Mill: Expansion of parking is 90% complete and will complete in late June/early July.
- Richmond Marine Terminal: a small rail project, with significant impact. Will provide CSX service to the port facility now leased by the Virginia Port Authority. Secretary Valentine commented on how barge service has grown here in recent months, and the importance of this connection to rail to continue to grow operations.
- Atlantic Gateway: DRPT is working to advance design on several bridges in the Franconia to Occoquan third track segment. One bridge will include funding from Fairfax County for additional scope/work to accommodate widening and future BRT plans for the roadway design.
- Long Bridge EIS: DDOT/FRA had added 11 months to the schedule, mainly for review and comments. Secretary Valentine, Director Mitchell, and Michael McLaughlin, Chief of Rail met with DDOT and FRA and had the schedule reevaluated and reduced by 5 months. Schedule concerns remain, especially related to National Park Service involvement. Scott K asked when construction could begin – as soon as 2026? Director Mitchell said possibly.

Jeremy Latimer gave a presentation on the Rail Industrial Access Policy Update.

- First part of the presentation focused on how Virginia Economic Development Partnership reporting compared with DRPT public benefits reporting.
- Second half of the presentation proposed policy changes based on discussion from April CTB-R.

- CTB-R consents with DRPT recommendations in the presentation. DRPT will schedule calls to go over a draft resolution with one – two members at a time.
- Goal: June CTB-R and CTB Workshop will have a presentation of a draft resolution.
- Goal: July Action on an RIA policy resolution

Michael Todd gave a presentation on a Highway/Rail Comparison Study:

- Several recent studies including the VRE 2040 Plan Review performed by DRPT, the Statewide Rail Plan, and workshops with CTB-R posed some questions that were not fully answered in recent studies.
- This initiative is to ask the right questions, provide data, methodology, and communication tools. The workshop session with CTB-R was to get feedback if these are the right questions.
- Scott K and Mary Hynes advocated for a corridor approach to comparison metrics between Highway and Rail. They agreed there may need to be further break down to urban, suburban, and rural within the corridors.
- Mary Hynes, Secretary Valentine, and Director Mitchell discussed ROW acquisition as a major variable in Northern Virginia compared to rural areas which should be understood when evaluating investment in different modes.
- Scott K. noted Highway and Rail comparisons can be “apples vs. oranges” and asked if our assumptions were that Highway was publicly owned and Rail privately owned?
- Michael Todd answered the study would get data for each mode and itemize costs and understand subsidy of each mode better.
- Secretary Valentine said the Connectivity Study done for the Lynchburg District which evaluated 8 modes of transportation. The greatest impact came from modes working together. We should seek to understand an optimal combination. She noted Rail was \$3.2B of a 21B budget, and this is not necessarily a competition, but a way to evaluate when we should look at rail investments vs highway.
- Scott K agreed and added this was about balancing modes, but that the determination can be a competitive process.
- Director Mitchel suggested looking at a cost/person or cost/metric ton moved of highway vs. rail and what the value of the benefit for additional capacity created.
- Scott K noted that corridors will have different needs for types of modes.
- Scott K asked if rail equipment necessary to utilize additional capacity is factored into the cost of rail. Michael Todd said we will itemize costs to better understand all costs and who owns or subsidizes equipment, construction, maintenance, etc.
- Secretary Valentine opined that this study could provide information toward justification to change Virginia’s formula driven approach.
- Mary Hynes added we should consider where benefits accumulate when we decide on what we are evaluating: some benefits accumulate to localities rather than the state.
- Director Mitchell added that safety and social costs should be incorporated, since rail is generally a safer mode for transportation of people and goods.

- Scott K. added that rail is terminal based vs. a dispersed highway driving pattern, and that I-81 interstate improvement in Virginia benefit Virginia, but rail network improvements to I-81 may require multi-state solutions.
- Mary Hynes offered that sometimes allowing the consultant to offer ideas on other considerations we didn't think about could improve the scope of the study.
- Scott K requested CTB-R see the scope before it goes out to consultants.
- There was general discussion about the firms DRPT will consider. Michael Todd told everyone we will solicit bids from our bench contractors, HDR, Moffat & Nichol, and Michael Baker. Director Mitchell clarified those consultants have access to sub-contractors with diverse expertise. DRPT will ask consultants if any other states are doing similar efforts, check with AASHTO. Secretary Valentine suggested EDR – Naomi Stein as a good contact for information on other state initiatives similar to this proposed study.

Public Comment received from Keith Wine with Grant Thornton regarding North Carolina's freight planning information.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50am.