



Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC)
Virginia Department of Transportation
Central Office Front Auditorium
1221 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia
July 10, 2018
10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Minutes

Members Present:

John McGlennon, Chair
Jim Dyke (joined late)
Cindy Mester

Hap Connors
Tom Fox

Brad Sheffield
Kate Mattice

1. Call to Order / Introductions (10:06AM) – John McGlennon opened up the meeting and asked the members to introduce themselves. For the purposes of the minutes, he clarified that Cindy Mester was not present at the last meeting but was watching the live stream and providing comments to the TSDAC by email.

2. Public Comment-Joe Dillard, Hampton Roads Transit

Joe Dillard from Hampton Roads Transit provided a presentation for public comment. He said that Brian Smith from Hampton Roads Transit, who is also a member of the TSDAC, was not able to participate in the day's meeting because he was on vacation. Joe Dillard said that he was providing comment on behalf of Brian Smith and other regional partners. HRT expressed a concern that the cost effectiveness score only benefited Northern Virginia and that new facilities that support existing service remain in the minor expansion category. A link to the presentation given by Joe Dillard is below:

<http://drpt.virginia.gov/media/2494/hrds-major-expansion-project-prioritization-july-9th.pptx>

Jennifer Mitchell said that she would forward this presentation to the TSDAC members. John McGlennon said that the group would work to address some of the issues posed by HRT during the day's meeting.

3. Outline of Approach and Key Policy Questions -Jennifer DeBruhl, Chief of Transit for DRPT,

Jennifer provided an outline of the meeting. She said that the day's discussion would focus on major expansion policy questions. She said that the group would review the policy principles document and make additional revisions. That document will serve as the basis for a policy for the Commonwealth Transportation Board to review in September. John McGlennon asked Jennifer DeBruhl how the issues raised in Mr. Dillard's comments will be addressed. Jennifer DeBruhl said it will be addressed in Tom's presentation in regards to the measures. She said questions about the applications and the cost benefit score are more program structure questions and that they will not be addressed in Tom's presentation but can be addressed before or after.

Cindy Mester asked that the group wait to discuss those issues until they have received the presentation. Jennifer DeBruhl said she would also provide an additional handout sent to DRPT by Brian Smith. John McGlennon noted that Jim Dyke had arrived to the meeting.

4. Major Expansion Project Prioritization-Tom Harrington, Cambridge Systematics

Tom Harrington gave a presentation on Major Expansion Project Prioritization. The following discussion points were made.

- a. Kate Mattice made a comment about the congestion mitigation factor. She said that congestion mitigation was one of six factors and that some will do better in one category than another. She said she would be interested to see how the ridership forecast is calculated. Jennifer Mitchell asked Tom Harrington how forecasting was done in Smart Scale. Tom Harrington said that you could do a ten year forecast, or for some projects there may be an opening year forecast and then a twenty year forecast. Tom said he sees advantages to both approaches.
- b. John McGlennon asked a question in regards to the economic development factor. He asked how this connects to redevelopment versus new development. Tom Harrington said that because transit is often a component of a redevelopment they want to capture that. Cindy Mester reinforced the importance of redevelopment even in a community that isn't distressed. She said to be consistent on the definition that the comprehensive plan be referenced. Jim Dyke asked that the Go Virginia economic development effort be incorporated. He said that Go Virginia is looking for areas of potential growth. Brad Sheffield said that workforce development should be looked at as well. If a transit system expands service to a neighborhood that had weak connections to jobs that could be a part of the measure. Tom Harrington said that some of this is covered in the accessibility measure.
- c. John McGlennon asked a question about the accessibility measure. He asked about the distinction between single occupancy vehicles and public transit when it comes to dense urban areas. He asked how much reduced travel time is anticipated. Tom Harrington said transit time is also incorporating wait time and walk time which can have an impact, i.e., more stops, shorter walk times and service coming more frequently. Cindy Mester asked Tom to expand on the GIS analysis. Jennifer Mitchell said that if an agency doesn't have the resources to do a GIS analysis itself than DRPT will do that for them. Brad Sheffield said that the Transit Development plans have some GIS plans and that the new strategic plans will look at jobs and houses and address some of the accessibility issues. Cindy Mester reminded the group that in thinking about the principles keeping things simple, manageable and consistent is important. She said that we need to make sure we don't put a burden on transit agencies. Jennifer Mitchell said DRPT is proposing GIS because is a more common tool and that DRPT can do all of those analyses so things are consistent. Jennifer DeBruhl said that DRPT does not want to go into something as complex as Smartscale. DRPT's transit capital program normally has less than 12 projects a year.
- d. Kate Mattice made a comment on the safety measure. She said from an editorial perspective it needs to be emphasized that transit is inherently safer. She said she was delighted to see the comment about the safety of passengers.
- e. Tom Fox made a comment about the Environmental Quality Measure. He said it is important to get credit for air quality improvements as transit agencies move towards electric and highbred vehicles. Kate Mattice said agencies should also receive credit for

energy efficient vehicles. Cindy Mester said this is also an area that is consistent with localities comp plans.

- f. Kate Mattice made a comment about the land use measure. She said that this measure appears to capture a change. She asked how you credit an area that already has really good land use. John McGlennon asked how well planned land use that has been in place but not serviced by transit, will be captured. Jennifer Mitchell said those may be captured in the accessibility measure. Brad Sheffield said that he agreed with Kate and that localities that have put in the work to support transit should be given credit, as well as those that are making good future plans to support density and that they should not compete against each other. John McGlennon made a general observation about criteria bleeding into other categories. He said he doesn't want things to be double counted. Jennifer said that Land Use measure is meant to capture future changes while the accessibility measure accounts for current conditions. John McGlennon said this should be made more explicit. Hap Connors asked if a bonus should be given for a project that scores highly in more than one measure. John McGlennon said that we want them to check as many boxes as possible without privileging a particular project because it gets into several criteria. Cindy Mester said that if we can keep measures as distinct as possible projects would be easier to score and not have unintended consequences. Cindy also said that she wants to make sure that the land use measure captures transit supported growth.
- g. Brad Sheffield asked if DRPT will continue to help with major expansion applications. Jennifer DeBruhl said DRPT will be engaged before the application even goes in. Jennifer Mitchell said that in future years DRPT will start working with applications long before February.
- h. Kate Mattice asked how DRPT will look at the financial capacity of transit agencies. Jennifer said this won't be captured in this criterion, but that will be an eligibility criterion. Kate Mattice said that after the VTA webinar she heard the desire to make sure that the projects selected have the means to operate the service and will succeed. Jennifer DeBruhl said that this has been built into program application guidance. DRPT will help grantees put together a funding package for a project.
- i. Kate Mattice asked a question about the cost effectiveness score and whether the state share is the DRPT capital program share or the total state share. Jennifer Mitchell clarified that it would be the transit capital share. She said that DRPT wants systems to be able to leverage other funding sources.
- j. Tom Harrington said that at the last meeting the group had elected to default to Smartscale weighting. Brad Sheffield said that at the end of the last meeting he suggested that the weighting map be updated to reflect the FTA urbanized area map instead of MPOs. He said that would also address Brian Smith's concerns about regions within regions. Kate Mattice said that most of the major expansion projects will come from urban areas so we may be getting overly specific unnecessarily. Jennifer Mitchell said that MPOs will be able to request a change to their weighing and DRPT will create a process for those requests. Once a region picks a category they need to stay with it and not change based on their submission.
- k. Brad Sheffield said that VDOT's Smartscale program was designed for urban areas to apply. Jennifer Mitchell said that quite a few projects were funded outside of Northern Virginia. She said that there was a fair amount of geographic diversity. Tom Fox pointed out that cost helps projects in other areas to rise to the top of the list. Jennifer Mitchell said that she wanted to dispel the rumor that there is a bias towards Northern

Virginia projects. Brad Sheffield said that he didn't want to imply bias; he just wanted to point out that urban areas would gravitate to SmartScale as a funding source. Brad asked if weighting was going to be factored in. Jennifer Mitchell said that the consensus at the last meeting was to stick with the SmartScale weighting with the caveat that DRPT will entertain requests to change weighting.

- l. Tom Fox asked if DRPT was going to coordinate with the MPOs. Jennifer DeBruhl said that DRPT is doing outreach on this in the Commonwealth but hasn't figured out the mechanics yet. DRPT will reach out to MPO's so they can discuss and decide what weighting to use. Jennifer Mitchell said there was an extensive process used for the SmartScale weighting that should still have value with transit. Jennifer DeBruhl said that weighting really didn't move the needle with SmartScale projects.
- m. Cindy Mester said that different categories and weighting would make it confusing for applicants, which goes against the policy principles.
- n. Jennifer DeBruhl reviewed next steps. She said DRPT has a lot of work to do behind the scenes. She said that in September a draft CTB policy will be provided for their review. There will be a webinar in August to share information on the operating formula and budgeting and leasing program.
- o. John McGlennon asked that the group go through Brian Smith's comments. John said that Brian had expressed concerns about the availability of funding in Northern Virginia because of dedicated transit funding. The question posed was if crediting other funds brought to the table in Northern Virginia hurts other parts of the state. Jennifer Mitchell said that this issue was discussed at CTB. The purpose of the prioritization is to get the "most bang" for the state's buck. She said DRPT will provide the raw benefits score and the cost effectiveness score to the CTB and that the CTB has the ability to pick a project with a high benefit score even if the cost effectiveness isn't as high.
 - i. Kate Mattice said that Northern Virginia doesn't have dedicated funding for their transit systems. VRE has gotten some regional gas tax funding. She said that most Northern Virginia transit agencies have gotten less as a result of the transit bill. Most of Northern Virginia gives their Federal funding to metro. NOVA transit providers are in a similar situation as the rest of the state.
 - ii. Jim Dyke said he does not want to see one part of the state pitted against the other. Having limited funding that regions are fighting against is not the goal. The state needs more overall transit funding. John McGlennon said he just wants to answer the points made by Brian Smith.
 - iii. John McGlennon asked the next question which was centered on a concern that redirecting existing resources to reorganize could be categorized as a major expansion based on an FTA rule. Jennifer DeBruhl said that Joe Dillard had left so we couldn't ask him for clarification. Jennifer Mitchell said our definitions have nothing to do with the FTA's decisions. She said there are criteria in the prioritization to account for these kinds of changes. LJ Hanson from Suffolk stood up to offer clarification on the points. John McGlennon said for purpose of minutes the TSDAC is not relying on the FTA definition. John McGlennon said that is a concern in his area as well on the difference between a service expansion and a state of good repair need. Jennifer Mitchell said that instead of a rule these should be dealt with on a case by case basis. She said she doesn't want to assume that they wouldn't compete well.

- iv. John McGlennon reviewed the next point made by Brian Smith that suggested a limit for regions. John McGlennon said regions are currently competing well but this could be revisited in future years. Kate Mattice said that could create unintended consequences. Cindy Mester said that it is important to discuss these comments publicly. She thinks there would be unforeseen consequences with the complexity of applications. Jennifer Mitchell says this will be revisited if we get through this and see a geographic bias.
 - p. Kate Mattice pointed out two other criteria that needed tweaking. In the environmental quality measure she wanted to make sure credit was given for green, energy efficient or emission controlling efforts. The other was land use and how those are dealt with. Jennifer Mitchell said we could take into account a 50-50 weight to identify an area that has increased TOD. She said we need to be careful to make sure it doesn't overlap with density. Kate Mattice said TOD is about more than employment but that they do overlap. JM said could do something similar to what FTA does for new starts.
 - q. Cindy Mester said that in addition to points Kate raised there had also been discussion on economic development to make sure we are capturing redevelopment and workforce. She also pointed out for congestion mitigation that a decision needs to be made on what is the appropriate forecast year for ridership.
 - r. Hap Connors said round 3 applications are coming now and he doesn't want this process to get confused with SmartScale because the process is already complex enough. Jennifer Mitchell said that we do need to work on the branding so it is identifiable as a transit program. Jennifer DeBruhl said that internally DRPT came up with the name MERIT (Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit). DRPT is working on a draft logo now.
5. Lunch-The meeting broke for lunch and reconvened at 12:30.
6. Summary of Key Policy Principles/Development of Draft CTB Policy-DRPT Chief of Transit Jennifer DeBruhl

Jennifer DeBruhl said that she sent out the original guiding principles requested by Brian Smith at the last meeting, as well as a draft summary of the TSDAC policy principles that were edited at the last meeting. Jennifer DeBruhl said that the group had stayed on the course they set two years ago when establishing the guiding principles. She said she was looking for feedback on the policy principles so that those can be used as a guideline for the CTB policy.

- a. Hap Connors asked how paratransit is counted and if it includes service as well as vehicles. Jennifer DeBruhl said there may be other ways to address these increasing needs. She said that the concern from HRT is that their increasing need may exceed the 5% threshold for minor enhancement. Jennifer DeBruhl said there may be ways to meet those increasing demands through technology and partnerships. This should provide flexibility because they are mandated to provide that service. Jennifer Mitchell said paratransit is different for HRT because it is service that is required by law and that it doesn't meet the same kind of criteria that would be looked at for other projects. Hap Connors asked if these services could be outsourced. Jennifer Mitchell said that could be covered in operating funding. Jennifer DeBruhl said that could be captured in strategic planning and that transit agencies should be encouraged to look at technology and innovation for paratransit service.
- b. Kate Mattice asked for clarification on the minor enhancement program structure. Kate Mattice also asked where in the document to clarify that if a facility is being put up for existing services, that is considered a SGR need. Jennifer Mitchell said we should

acknowledge that this has been looked at but does not think there should be a rule. She said that this should be looked at on a case by case basis. Jennifer DeBruhl said that the concern from Hampton Roads is that they are going through a service analysis which is bringing up lots of questions. It will be a couple of years before we know what the outcome of this review and can address those issues. John McGlennon reiterated that we need to highlight that we are not relying on the FTA definition of a major expansion.

- c. Kate Mattice moved to the second page and said it was fantastic to reference mid-life overhauls. She is not sure how they are being scored. Jennifer DeBruhl said that DRPT is working with Cambridge Systematics to figure out how those will be scored so that can fit into the program application guidance.
- d. Kate Mattice referenced the statement “Until the SGR back log is reduced” and expressed concern. Jennifer DeBruhl said she had rewritten this bullet many times. Currently there are things in the system that are so old that they are well beyond a state of good repair need. She is trying to capture the discussion of the TSDAC of how to get to the “just in time replacement/predictive model”. She asked for suggestions on how to capture that. Kate Mattice said we should acknowledge this is another area that will be looked at again. John McGlennon asked if at some point these factors would not be used. Jennifer DeBruhl said age and mileage will always be used but the calculation could be different so that you are predicting the age and mileage when the vehicle will be replaced. Tom Harrington said currently highest points are given to the oldest assets but at some point the highest points could go to a vehicle that will be replaced on time. Cindy Mester said the wording in the document needs to capture this discussion.
- e. Brad Sheffield said that the Guiding Principles references DRPT staff helping in a technical capacity and asked if that should be reflected in the Policy Principles document as well. Jennifer Mitchell said that we can include something to describe what DRPT will do to help with applications and analysis. Major Expansion applications will need a different application cycle. DRPT could offer to perform analysis at the request of the grantee or all of the time. Cindy Mester mentioned that this document should have a DRPT category to clarify these points.
- f. Cindy Mester said that some of the weighting discussion should be incorporated here. She also suggested that some of the guiding principles should be incorporated into the policy principles document.
- g. Cindy Mester asked if this document will be the basis of the presentation to CTB. Jennifer Mitchell said that the presentation to the CTB will not include this and will just be informational. The policy principles document will be converted into something to go to CTB for their approval. The slides have not been posted yet so that they could be updated to reflect changes from today’s discussion.
- h. Cindy Mester asked when TSDAC would see the next version of the Policy Principles and when there would be a vote. John McGlennon asked if there was general consensus on this version, incorporating the edits from today. Jen DeBruhl said that a revised version, along with the minutes, can be provided to the TSDAC by the end of the month. She said that edits can be made informally, keeping in mind FOIA open meeting laws. She said that in September DRPT will provide the TSDAC with a draft CTB policy.
- i. Cindy Mester asked if the TSDAC could take a consensus vote in August. Jennifer Mitchell said that webinar is not great for discussion and that meeting is informational. It will be publicly noticed. John McGlennon asked if the group is satisfied with draft if

they can put the document on the agenda for gratification in September. Jen DeBruhl said that in September DRPT will need TSDAC concurrence with the CTB policy.

- j. Jim Dyke moved that if the TSDAC was in agreement with what they had in front of them with amendments then they approve this as basis for the CTB policy. Brad Sheffield seconded the motion. Cindy Mester wanted to confirm that all of the discussion from the meeting will be incorporated into a revised draft and that the CTB resolution will come separately. She said that she was not comfortable voting with the document in such a draft form. It was confirmed that the voting on the CTB resolution will come separately in September. The document, with revisions, was approved unanimously.

7. Wrap up/Next Steps-Jennifer DeBruhl, DRPT Chief of Transit

Jennifer DeBruhl told the group that they would receive the revised Policy Principles document and the minutes from the meeting by August 1. She said that there would be an informational webinar on August 29th on the operating formula and the major equipment leasing program. She said that there will be an in person meeting at the DRPT office on September 7th. That meeting will focus on the draft CTB policy and the operating formula. After that meeting the draft will be released for public comment. Two weeks later the draft policy will go to the CTB. Jennifer DeBruhl said that the meeting in September will focus on the draft CTB policy and begin the conversation on the operating formula. Meetings will be set up in October and November to focus on the operating formula. A draft policy on the operating policy will go to the CTB for review in December and action in January.

- a. Kate Mattice asked how much discussion and input the TSDAC can have in regards to operating assistance. She said that she knows there are words in the law and so she wants to make sure we know what flexibilities exist and what she is looking to this body for. Jennifer Mitchell said DRPT is not quite sure yet. DRPT is working on a draft proposal for a starting point. Jennifer DeBruhl said language in the bill does not allow for modification of service factors without a year of notice. Jennifer Mitchell said that the August webinar will be to bring new members up to speed on what the existing factors are before we look into changing them. Kate Mattice said she did not know there would be any conversation on changes so she was glad to be a part of that process. Cindy Mester said there needs to be a legal determination on the code and a process for making changes will need to be developed. John McGlennon said that re looking at those factors will be an essential part of the process.
- b. Cindy Mester asked if we can look at the branding again in September.

8. Public Comment

- a. Zach Trogdon from Williamsburg Area Transit thanked the group for their work and for listening to the agencies and their specific concerns. He said that he had worked with HRT on the information presented today on their concerns. He wanted to make sure that any structural imbalances were dealt with. He said that no one expects the outcome to be perfect but he sees that the TSDAC is dedicated to the process. Zach said that the agencies are happy to provide feedback as they go through the process.
- b. LJ Hansen with Suffolk Transit thanked the committee for their work. He said that there has never been enough money for transit but transit agencies have always been in it together. There is now competition which pits people against one another. He hopes that the TSDAC will keep in mind that if one system succeeds and another fails that they all fail. He said that Smartscale was put together for transportation projects, specifically roadway projects. He said that money was given to each region to prioritize. He is curious about the process of normalizing and how projects in different regions will

compete against one another. He is also curious to see how projects not deemed eligible for Smartscale submission will do. He said that there are more projects out there than what was submitted to Cambridge. He asked that GIS applications be standardized. LJ said that originally the service delivery factors were applied to new money only and that now they are applied to all money so small systems compete against each other. He asked if there could possibly be a tiered approach.

9. The meeting was adjourned at 1:10.