



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Commonwealth Transportation Board

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Chairman

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Agenda Item # NB1

RESOLUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH TRANSPORTATION BOARD

December 17, 2009

MOTION

Made By: Mr. White Seconded By: Mr. Dickens Action: Motion Carried, Unanimously

Title: A Resolution on the Route 29 Corridor Study

WHEREAS, the Route 29 Corridor (the Corridor) is a major north-south roadway in the Commonwealth, that connects Northern Virginia with North Carolina (a distance of 219 miles), is designated as a National Highway System (NHS) Route, and serves both long-distance and local traffic, the interests of which can often be in conflict; and

WHEREAS, because the Route 29 Corridor is a major asset of the Commonwealth, the General Assembly is the steward of this asset, and the Commonwealth Transportation Board (Board) has a leadership responsibility in protecting this asset; and

WHEREAS, many studies have been incrementally conducted on the Corridor over the past 30 years, none of the studies have addressed the entire corridor in an inclusive manner, as an entity; and

WHEREAS, this Board held a meeting on January 16, 2008, with affected General Assembly members and other elected officials, to present and solicit comments on a plan for a corridor-wide study that would develop a blueprint for the Corridor to serve as a framework for future transportation improvements in the Route 29 Corridor and for other Corridors of Statewide Significance (the Blueprint); and

WHEREAS, the Blueprint should be a multi-modal plan recommending both broad, corridor-wide strategies and specific improvements that preserve the functionality of the Corridor through context sensitive designs in order to efficiently move people and goods, improve safety, reduce congestion, address local traffic needs, preserve Corridor through-travel as well as local trips, enhance economic activity and protect the scenic and historic integrity of the Corridor; and

WHEREAS, a consultant team, led by the Parsons Transportation Group of Virginia, has conducted the Study on the Route 29 Corridor and presented a draft Route 29 Corridor Blueprint for public review; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the public comment, a number of consensus strategies and goals emerged for improving and protecting the Corridor (“consensus strategies and goals”), including the following:

- There are 3 distinct sections of the Corridor for development and management purposes which should control investment in the Corridor;
- There should be far fewer entrance and exit points on Route 29. Rather than center all development on the major route, more parallel roads should be used;
- Congestion must be addressed through increased use of technology, for example, re-timing of signals and increased traveler information;
- Travel by non-auto modes needs to be increased and land use patterns that support travel by transit, bicycle and walking should be promoted;
- Planning for the Corridor must address both land use and transportation;
- Planning must be coordinated across jurisdictional boundaries;
- VDOT needs to play a stronger role in preserving the transportation investments;
- The Corridor is a statewide scenic, historic, and environmental resource and must be preserved; and

WHEREAS, the Study recognizes that different parts of the Corridor function differently and provides guidance for addressing local and corridor-wide transportation needs in context sensitive ways; and,

WHEREAS, the Board, while acknowledging the work of the consultant team, has determined that the process used to develop the Blueprint and recommendation of specific improvements was flawed, in that:

- the Blueprint fails to include several recommendations of the consultant team that were removed prior to presentation to the Board, some of which were apparently

initially opposed or favored by the localities affected, which removal the Board views was premature;

- some controversial specific improvements were included as preliminary recommendations despite the fact that the scope of the Study did not include conducting new traffic modeling or gathering new traffic data on specific improvements that might allow their potential benefits to be compared to their significant adverse impacts;
- the lack of the foregoing data and time constraints precluded the public and local elected officials from having the opportunity to fully understand and comment on specific proposed improvements,
- the foregoing problems limited the Board's ability to adequately evaluate many of the specific improvements included in the Study's preliminary recommendations and to play a leadership role in developing consensus on some of the specific improvements

WHEREAS, this Board has the obligation to take a leadership role in developing consensus concerning affected localities with regard to recommendations for improvements in Corridors of Statewide Significance, and in order to do so the Board must have access to the full and complete recommendations of its consultants; and

WHEREAS, this Board does not believe that the Study, and process by which it was developed, produced the template which Board desires as a Blueprint for future planning for other Corridors of Statewide Significance because of the insufficiencies cited above;

WHEREAS, it is important to educate local governments about the greater role which the General Assembly and this Board envision for VDOT and DRPT in linking land use with transportation and to solicit the localities' input in enhancing this linkage so that local governments can effectively work with the State in planning and zoning within their jurisdictional boundaries and in coordinating planning across jurisdictional boundaries;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Commonwealth Transportation Board hereby accepts the Consensus Strategies and Goals of the Route 29 Corridor Study Final Report set forth above, and directs the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) to use the corridor-wide strategies and goals discussed in Chapter 3 of the Report as a high-level guide for local and regional planning within the Corridor; and to work with the localities, planning district commissions, metropolitan planning organizations and transit agencies along the Route 29 Corridor in implementing them; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board directs VDOT and DRPT to work closely with a Subcommittee of this Board to develop and present a draft process to the Board by April 1, 2010, for Route 29 and future corridor studies, that addresses the cited insufficiencies

and that positions the Board to lead in developing consensus among the affected localities, planning district commissions, metropolitan planning organizations and transit agencies along the corridor (“new Blueprint”); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, because the Route 29 Study Report’s guidance in the form of recommended specific improvements, requires additional work and study which should not be delayed, the Board directs, upon Board approval of a new Blueprint, VDOT and DRPT to bring forward recommendations by July 1, 2010 on the following issues, and such other specific ones as may be identified by this Board:

- A prioritized list of intersections to be replaced by grade separated intersections or interchanges.
- A plan to improve mobility and accessibility north of Charlottesville, evaluating various alternatives, and not limited to prior proposals.
- A plan to improve mobility and accessibility in the Gainesville, Haymarket and Buckland region, evaluating various alternatives, and not limited to prior proposals.
- A plan to minimize the number of traffic control signals in the Corridor; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board will authorize an implementation program (Corridor Master Plan) for the Route 29 Corridor once the new Blueprint is approved and the foregoing issues with the Study Report have been addressed; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the cost for carrying out these activities shall be paid for from transportation planning funds and multi-modal planning funds.

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